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DEAR EMIGRE,

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Rather than engaging in an analysis of the production, the role, and the implications of the designer's subjectivity vis-a-vis the written text, Pedrosa seemed to favor producing a largely vapid collection of postmodern citations and a trivial discussion of whether he should submit his manuscript typewritten or lovingly scripted by hand.

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At this point, Pedrosa could have undertaken an enlightening essay on the role of the designer in the production of texts — a valid and valuable contribution to both design and textual studies. As it is, though, he spends a few paragraphs mumbling about modern/postmodern distinctions, offers a few examples of subjective influence in contemporary typography, and ultimately concludes that the designer, too, is dead. "Born dead," I believe he says. *Whatever*.

His dismissal of semiotics (a field in which many designers, perhaps unwittingly, earn their bread-and-butter) serves only as a weak excuse for arguing the impossibility of totalization in textual interpretation — a lesson taught in a thousand sitcoms, and a point only the most naive thinkers would aspire to challenge. Pedrosa seems to decry the idea that writers and designers might collaborate to "direct the text's meaning" as a modernist deathbed wish, a "last cry for control."

His comment that the designer (or even the editor) is "the first of the author's assassins" reveals a total miscomprehension of Barthes, and statements like "Death naturally signals erasure and rewriting" echo both the lyrical quality of Barthes's writing and its vaguely philosophical poverty. Call it a metaphor stretched too thin.

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"Such naiveté." Yes, such. The mouthful of partly-digested "Foucauldian social orthopedics" used to argue that computer-generated Helvetica is just as personal as my socially-generated left hand script is absurdity at its finest. I got the impression throughout this essay that Pedrosa has a grasp of philosophy about as profound as that of the average graduate student in an English department — and, unfortunately, that's not a compliment.

Having read up to that point, I promptly turned the page, hoping for improvement. No such luck. End of essay. I was at first rather startled at such an abrupt ending. Then I realized that my search for closure was hopelessly outdated. The death of both the author and the designer left me omnipotent, "the ultimate murderer." I took out my .45 and lifted it to my temple...

Alive and kicking.

a.h.s. boy, *dada typographics*, <http://www.nothingness.org>

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Cover design *Emigre* #38 by:

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of Wilmington Delaware.

## Mrs Eaves

The typeface used throughout this issue, *Mrs Eaves*, was designed by Zuzana Licko in 1996. Following is a description of the ideas and inspiration that fuelled its design.

I can't remember when I first encountered a type specimen that had been printed by letterpress, or even if this experience preceded my knowledge of phototype technology. However, I do remember vividly, being shocked by the great difference between letterpress type and phototype, especially when comparing specimens of what was supposedly the same typeface design.

What impressed me was not so much the fact that there was a difference; it's expected that

different technologies will yield different results. What surprised me was that this difference was so uniquely uniform. Phototype font revivals consistently had an uncanny polished tightness, as though they sought to reproduce the original lead typefaces in some previously unattainable perfection, sometimes with such tight spacing that letters would practically touch; a very difficult task in lead. Perhaps it was their newly-found achievability that made these characteristics desirable at the time. Rarely did designers seek to capture the warmth and softness of letterpress printing that often occurred due to the "gain" of impression and ink spread. Digital font revivals merely extended the quest for perfection introduced by phototype. This evolution is particularly strange in light of the fact that the development of type manufacturing technology has increased freedom of expression by reducing the mechanical restrictions on the form of type. One might imagine that these technological developments would in fact have also increased the variety of interpretations on the past.



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stuff). Lately however (seems it coincides with the conversion to the small format [and I'm not saying the two are linked in any way, although maybe]) I am finding I have less and less tolerance for what seems your hearty appetite for endless pedantic babble. I miss the cool issues with Ed Fella interviews or the Designers Republic. I miss the focus on the work and therefore pictures of it. *Yeahyeahyeahok*. I am a so-called "workingstiff-type graphic designer" and hence have always had a bit of difficulty relating to the Frenchstructuralist rantings and their application to current graphic design etc, but I know what I like looking at, ya dig? And I like to look at *Emigre* (or did).

OK. Please keep your promo stuff coming, I really love the fonts and the design, just skip me when you're passing out the rambling...

Peace to you and thanks for the fun,

Later.

ataobo@netcom.com

DEAR EMIGRE,

I was thoroughly driven to tedious boredom by your last issue. Although my hands seem to have fun flipping through the different format, the articles seemed quite naf, or even daft. I think it's often good to showcase the talents of contemporary designers, but you've gone too far with this issue.

Although I was dismayed by the content of this issue, the structure was very unique and is an example of how *Emigre* is willing to experiment with form. In general I find most of your other issues quite brilliant. I should say that you need to refind that brilliance so that letters just like this one are kept to a minimum.

Better days,

Mr John at the Institute of Contextual Art

P.S.: I wasn't very keen on the latest issue of *Eye*, so don't feel too bad. Perhaps I'm disgruntled by the lack of people who don't feed the trout.

DEAR EMIGRE,

I was fortunate enough to be in New York for Christmas and New Year '95 and was able to collect personal copies of *Emigre* 34, 35 and 36 from Untitled [a bookstore] in SoHo. Needless to say, I was delighted to find *i-jusi* #1 mentioned in issue 36. The result of this exposure in *Emigre* is that we have received numerous enquiries from the USA, Sweden and the UK for news on *i-jusi* and South African design. *Emigre* was the first international publication to recognize and promote our aims.

Thanks for your assistance in our commitment to taking African creativity to a wider world.

Garth Walker, Orange Juice Design, South Africa

DEAR EMIGRE,

I am not and have never been a student of graphic design.

I am a graphic designer for a small nonprofit organization.

I did study journalism and communication.

It still interests me.

I am not renewing my subscription to *Emigre* magazine.

I enjoyed following *Emigre* through four years of articles and design.

Lately I haven't had the urge to read the babble

That is the stories you deem fit for the pages of *Emigre*.

I miss the larger format.

I miss the poster art.

I miss the gallery of designs.

As I look back, I realize now

that it wasn't *Emigre's* design that drew me into its pages.

It was the selections of other design that did.

I am sad that *Emigre* will no longer spout from the top of the magazine rack at my fave bookstore.

It will be confined to a resting place at the bottom with the rest of the art mags.

I am sad that designers babble babble about everything/nothing

never seeming

past, instead of reducing them. Ever since then, I have contemplated trying my hand at reviving an "old favorite" in a manner that challenged the common, preconceived method of interpreting the classics.

When selecting a typeface for revival, I recalled reading in various sources that Baskerville's work was severely criticized by his peers and critics throughout his lifetime and after. From personal experience, I could sympathize. One recurring criticism of Baskerville's type addressed its "sterile" quality. D.B. Updike, in his book *Printing Types* of 1922, wrote, "As we look at Baskerville's specimen-sheets, the fonts appear very perfect, and yet somehow they have none of the homely charm of Caslon's letter. It is true that the types try the eye. Baskerville's contemporaries, who also thought so, attributed this to his glossy paper and dense black ink. Was this the real fault? The difficulty was, I fancy, that in his typedesigns the hand of the writing-master betrayed itself, in making them too even, too perfect, too 'genteel,' and so they charmed too apparently and artfully – with a kind of finical, sterile refinement."

Much of the criticism Baskerville received for his work was fueled by type snobbery and professional jealousy, as is illustrated in the following passage from the book *Letters* by James Hutchinson: "There's the story that Benjamin Franklin, in a letter to Baskerville, told him of a practical joke that he, Franklin, had played on a critic of Baskerville's types. The critic said that Baskerville's types would be 'the means of blinding all the readers in the nation owing to the thin and narrow strokes of the letters.' Franklin gave the critic a specimen of Caslon's types with Caslon's name removed, said it was Baskerville's and asked for a specific criticism. The critic, an author whose book was printed in the same Caslon face, responded at great



never seeming to realize that  
design is primarily a service (not art).

&

Art is primarily expressive (not typically reader-friendly).

Designers are losing track of the line between the two.

Besides that, *Emigre's* design is basic (not simple, not clean).

Hey but the typefaces are beautiful.

I have fun scanning the catalogs (thanks for all the characters!)

and popping the puppies into Fontographer. What an app!

Is that illegal? Should I buy one first?

I nudge them a bit — don't look too much like your's.

The music is hot.

Most of it.

But I am sad about the mag.

Hm.

Have a great day.

*Ross Graham Namaste, keeping warm in Minnesota*

DEAR EMIGRE,

I have finished re-reading your latest issue and have found that I have indeed erred in thinking that this issue was boring. It is absolutely interesting and I have reexamined it through a whole new set of glasses. Apparently, I was being programmed by too many other magazines that had more to visually satisfy me. Unfortunately, they're the ones who are actually lacking in good content. Please accept my apologies and I shall be waiting for the next issue.

Kind regards,

*Mr John at the Institute of Contextual Art*

DEAR EMIGRE,

Readers of *Emigre* #37 may be puzzled by the letter from Gérard Mermoz, which is addressed to me, but which from its first sentence onwards speaks rather to *Emigre* and the world. The answer to this puzzle is simple. Because we know each other slightly, I sent Gérard a copy of the letter to you that was also published in #37: a courtesy that he didn't follow with his reply.

The simple big point I tried to make in my pamphlet *Fellow Readers* is that post-Saussurean or poststructuralist thought is reality-denying and is a hopeless guide to processes as worldly and bodily as the generation, multiplication, distribution and understanding of texts and images. This is not a very original thought: many subtle and lucid critics have made the case against the breathy tortuous abstractions of poststructuralism much better than I ever could. The notes to my text pointed to some of these critics.

Failure to acknowledge the material world is why Gérard Mermoz, protector of the true deconstructive scriptures, will never get his theoretics to do anything. It's not in deconstruction to do anything but read. Reading is a vital activity — an act of creation, not of passive reception — which may well fire the imagination; but reading doesn't itself bring texts and images into existence. And deconstructive reading, with its indifference to the material world, and its desperate tone of cynical suspicion, dampens and deadens the imagination. Of course the North American adulterers (McCoy, Lupton, Miller and the others) had to misunderstand deconstruction — otherwise they'd never have produced anything. Meanwhile Gérard Mermoz condemns himself to a hell of theory, polishing his reflective sunglasses. I think that even catching flies is beyond his method.

Gérard Mermoz seems to affect some surprise that I could have written the piece titled *THE RHETORIC OF NEUTRALITY*, which was in fact delivered as a lecture in 1984 and first published in 1985. The lecture made a simple argument: that everything bears traces of history and human striving (to try it without that muzzy word "ideology"). Well, the ideas of that piece must seem pretty banal to anyone who (as I did) went through the aftermath of 1968, joined in anti-war and anti-apartheid agitation, sat in on the antipsychiatry movement of R.D.Laing and David Cooper, encountered the women's movement, read

Theodor Adorno

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Theodor Adorno and Walter Benjamin as the English translations came out through the 1970s, tried to get to grips with buildings by Aldo van Eyck and Herman Hertzberger, watched the films of the new German cinema, listened to music by Luciano Berio and Cathy Berberian, Max Roach and Anthony Braxton. I could go on. But maybe this is enough to make the point that there is a whole tradition of critical action and thought that is far more radical, more eloquent, more vivid, more genuinely questioning and thus eventually hopeful, than the evasive, preening jargonizing of the poststructuralist thinkers and – even worse – their epigones. And, judging by the precision and clarity of his political writings, I'd be inclined to endorse Pat Watson's suggestion (letter #37), that Noam Chomsky could help here, if help from linguistics is what you want.

"Now it is when history is denied that it is most unmistakably at work." Thus Roland Barthes in his book *Le degré zéro de l'écriture*, a book I read in 1969, soon after the English translation had come out. Many of us knew already 25 years (if not centuries) ago that texts are enmeshed in rhetoric, that there is no single or simple "legibility". The naive mechanistic, reductively ergonomic view of the world – the view that Mermoz still clankingly attempts to question – went out of the window years ago: certainly it did for anyone who read Chomsky's demolition of the behaviorist theories of B.F. Skinner (first published in 1959), or read R.D. Laing's *Self and Others* or Norman O. Brown's *Life Against Death*, two influential books of the years around 1968. But we decided not to get hung up on undecidability – not turn it into a baroque fetish and a program for design – because we had something to say, and we wanted to say it as clearly, fairly and forcefully as we could.

Gérard Mermoz points to two exclusions from the main focus of my book *Modern Typography*: Dada and Futurism. Well, I find this historical fault-finding a bit rich, coming from someone so anti-historical in his thought. (The way, in his article in #36, Mermoz ran together the names of Morison, Warde, Ruder and Rand was a small example of this habit of mind.) My book was brief and tried to address some issues that I was exercised by as I wrote it, in London in the mid-1980s. I felt then, and still do, that Futurism and Dada had had more than their share of historical attention. I was concerned to recover or freshly introduce what had been excluded. And I felt that the history of typography shouldn't be dominated by the history of art movements. I tried to defuse constructivism, to play up the awkward importance of traditional typography, to introduce themes such as the measurement of type and the pricing of work, which lie outside the scope of old fashioned art history. Also, I was concerned to unsettle the idea of the modern as just a limited, twentieth-century phenomenon, and to give it a much longer history. I did my best to incorporate and embody the critical spirit in the book, to put my cards on the table, to explain what I was doing.

If I ever get around to doing another edition of *Modern Typography*, there should be a chapter on Italy, and thus there would be discussion of Futurism (and other less celebrated phenomena of that time and those places) and the complex setting of Futurist artists, writers and designers in their Italian political context. Similarly I could try to deepen the discussion of Europe around the First World War, and thus give attention to Dada (and other less celebrated phenomena of that time and those places). But I wouldn't include those topics, as Gérard Mermoz seems to want, merely because they give some kind of pedigree and legitimacy to his "new typography" of the westernized world in the 1980s and 1990s.

In my letter in #37 I tried to point to the big differences between the "new typography" of 1918–30 (or so) and the present "new typography" that Mermoz proposes. In reply he remarks that he often writes his term as "new typography/ies". Here I laughed aloud. You can't win with these guys: not only do they want it both ways – maybe that's a fair quota – but they want it an infinite number of ways as well.

Singular-slash-plural: a glimpse of the endless, hopeless relativism of poststructuralist thought at work. Although apparently complex and sophisticated, the effect of such thought is reductive and unifying. Endless decentering leads to the maze, to stodge and lack of difference. History is abolished. No wonder that, like Michael Bierut (letter #37), the defenders of critical reason are driven to making jokes and drawing rough vignettes from everyday life – hoping to jolt the scholiasts into some sense. We throw bricks to see if these dinosaurs actually live.

For adequately complex and realistic ways of thinking, you have to turn away from the scriptures (deconstruction or any other such self-contained and self-justifying belief system), and engage rather in critical reflection and action in the world. And if you want some bracing, subtle reasoning that puts paid to the relativism of Mermoz and his teachers, then have a look, for example, at the recent writings of Terry Eagleton, Christopher Norris, Edward Said, or Sabina Lovibond (*Feminism and postmodernism*, *New Left Review* #178),

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at great length about the faults he felt were very apparent in the type. Before he had finished, he complained that his eyes were suffering from the strain of reading the text."

Sadly, because the proliferation, and consequently the assimilation, of new typefaces occurred at a much slower pace in his time than it does today, Baskerville missed the good fortune, which many "envelope-pushing" type designers enjoy today, of having his work appreciated during his lifetime.

**B**askerville's work has in retrospect been classified as the ultimate transitional typeface, being pivotal between old style typefaces, and the modern typefaces that followed. Similarly,

from a practical standpoint, Baskerville has achieved the status of a respected text face consistent with today's reading preferences. This illustrates once again that readers' habits do change in time and are influenced by repeated exposure to particular typefaces, more so than by any measurable physical characteristics of the typefaces themselves. In my rendition of this classic typeface, I have addressed the highly criticized feature of sharp contrast. To a great degree, the critics were wrong; it did not prevent Baskerville from becoming assimilated as a highly legible text face, and in fact, the high contrast between stems and hairlines became quite desirable, as is apparent in typefaces such as Bodoni, which followed in the lineage. However, the criticism did make me wonder about possible alternatives. Thus, I was prompted to explore the path not taken. After all, the sharp contrast evidenced in Baskerville was new at the time of its creation due to recent developments in printing and paper-making technologies. In his pursuit of "perfect" printing, John Baskerville developed ultra-smooth and brilliant white papers, as well as intensely black printing



Review #178), go back to the late Ernest Gellner (for example, his book *Legitimation of Belief*), read Peter Dews's *Logics of Disintegration*, take up Gillian Rose's book *Dialectic of Nihilism*, or read her astonishing and beautiful, almost posthumously published autobiography *Love's Work*: "The only way forward was to make a virtue out of the limitation: the boundaries of legitimate knowledge are endlessly challengeable, corrigible, movable, by God, by man, by woman. There is no rationality without 'uncertain' grounds, without 'relativism' of authority. Relativism of authority does not establish the authority of relativism: it opens reason to new claimants."

Regards,

Robin Kinross, London, England

DEAR EMIGRE,

Instead of starting to write my thesis, I am further procrastinating to finally raise my hand in this discussion. I make mention of the thesis so that a certain portion of your reader/respondents may dismiss my comments unread or start sharpening their knives (or X-actos, I suppose) for the evisceration. As the topic of my thesis is contemporary design criticism ("Not only has this guy gone to graduate school for design, he's studying this meaningless crap! Good luck in the real world, pal!"), I've probably cleared at least half the room. To those remaining, I've decided to speak up in the wake of the past two issues on design writing that arrived just in time for my study but too early for my own submission. (Oops, there goes

another half. Oh well.) My first response was expressed to me when I questioned my own investigation: Either you get it or you don't. Either you're willing to challenge yourself and your beliefs or you're not. These are my biases: I don't draw lines between real and unreal worlds, art/design, professional/amateur, high/low, *et al.* I don't value or dismiss "Professor" over "Partner" or vice versa when I'm reading. As I have neither title (and am not aspiring to any), that's probably no revelation. I'm looking for people who will credit and provoke my imagination. *Emigre* does these things and that's why I respect it.

To study all this writing is to study its detractors. What's apparent is that for many critics, these ideas represent a threat to their authority. There seems to be a group of designers who, following the lead of the Great Men, ascend to positions of design power then await their coronation. Instead, to their disgust, they find that the younger designers are looking elsewhere for meaning and inspiration (read: *Emigre*). This is the true problem they have with education: it's not confirming their status. Having completely invested themselves in the commercial route and its values, they have contempt for any other path to recognition. They express a desire for more erudition from young designers but not if it ventures into anything that questions their preeminence.

I have doubts about many of the articles *Emigre* publishes but I switch off when the rebuttal consists entirely of smug dismissals and questioning motives. Before exposing others' bed-partners, you should check whose sheets you're under. Perhaps it's the recognition that one's own logrolling is ripe for deconstruction and making preemptive strikes.

Obviously, I have more patience for academic "navel-gazing" than I have for "professional" absolutism. Neither group has the franchise on arrogance or doctrinaire process. I don't expect a big happy design family and would feel out of place settling in either company. (Though the recent *Eclecticism and Modernism* [conference] was more comfortable than I expected — those plastic chairs excepted.) Here's another vote for a third (or fourth) party. Designers often represent a fusion of the *worst* aspects of artists and "professionals": supercilious because of their supposed creativity and Real World mastery. Having spent most of my time in the "fine art" world, I know from jargon-ridden, impenetrable analysis. While it provides a warning for aspiring design critics, it also shows that status quo, surface readings just won't do. Subtle and involved topics — which describes most art and design — require intricate and nuanced thought and writing. Would that we could all be simple again in *anything*.

Overall, I value thoughtfulness over cerebralism. I've been pleased to find that most design writing has, so far, fallen into the former category. I've learned some things. And I appreciate the reading lists provided by people like Danny Butt, as it means I'll learn more. I fear the anti-intellectualism frequently expressed by critics<sup>1</sup> far more than being professionally black-balled. Perhaps this is the ultimate insult for people who believe they are lords of the Real World: *I reject your world*. And then live happily ever after.

Sorry for the long-windedness, but, hey — it could've been the thesis. And now, to employ the Real World sign-off code: *Back to work!*

Sincerely,

Kenneth FitzGerald, Cambridge, Massachusetts

<sup>1</sup> Nothing really. I just didn't want to disappoint.

Vent, respond,  
comment or criticize

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printing ink. In fact, as D.B. Updike suggests in the previous quote, the contrast achieved through the use of these papers

and inks probably contributed to the criticism of his work more than the design of his typefaces. Ultimately, it may have been merely the fascination of meeting these technical challenges that made this pursuit so desirable at the time, and its proliferation in our era is merely a perpetuation that remains largely unquestioned.

An aspect of Baskerville's type that I intended to retain is that of overall openness and lightness. To achieve this while reducing contrast, I have given the lower case characters a wider proportion. In order to avoid increasing the set-width, I reduced the x-height, relative to the cap-height. Consequently, Mrs Eaves has the appearance of setting about one point size smaller than the average typeface in lower case text sizes.

I realize that certain aspects of this revival probably contradict Baskerville's intentions, but my point in doing so is to take those elements from Baskerville that have become familiar, and thus highly legible, to today's reader, and to give these my own interpretation of a slightly loose Baskerville that may be reminiscent of a time past.

- Zuzana Licko -



# Copping an *Attitude* | PART 1

by RUDY VANDERLANS

- 1 YOU CAN'T OPEN A DESIGN MAGAZINE these days without stumbling across an article or letter quarreling over who owns which typeface. The discussion about Erik Spiekermann's *Meta* in *Eye*<sup>1</sup> magazine and the ruse over a customized version of Martin Majoor's *Scala* in the recent *AIGA Journal of Graphic Design*<sup>2</sup> are but two recent examples. It comes as no surprise. The making and selling of typefaces are perhaps experiencing one of the most exhilarating times in their history, much of it the result of the democratizing effect the Macintosh computer has had on this 500 year old tradition. Not only does the Macintosh enable anyone willing to invest the time to design and manufacture typefaces, it has also turned every computer user into a potential purchaser of fonts, making typefaces a rather valuable economic commodity.
- 2 Type was never before sold directly to end users. It was sold to typesetting businesses who specialized in setting type according to the specifications of graphic design professionals. Actually, the mainstay for companies that manufactured type was the typesetting equipment. Often the typefaces were part of the purchase of the equipment. World-wide, only a handful of large type foundries existed, which licensed or commissioned fonts from a small group of renowned type designers.
- 3 This all changed in 1984, when the Macintosh computer was introduced. Even though it took a few years to catch on, when people realized the financial and creative potential of typefaces made possible by the personal computer, a burgeoning of upstart type foundries and distributors occurred. For the first time in history, the established foundries found their market share yielding to a new breed of font foundries: those involved in high technology.
- 4 Over the next ten years, besides many font "volume discounters," a growing number of smaller "alternative" foundries were started. While the latter were initially seen as insignificant, recently they actually seem to be breathing new life back into the older foundries, as both Monotype and Agfa have become official licensors of foundries such as [T-26], one of the numerous upstart foundries known for its many experimental student typefaces.
- 5 Within the past ten years literally thousands of new typeface designs have been added to what was already a sizable number, and the demand for fonts has never been greater. While it is undeniable that this explosion has given a great boost to the development of type (at least it has brought wide attention to what used to be a completely obscure craft practiced by only a few, mostly male, craftspeople), it hasn't been all positive. Due to the increasing demand for typefaces that it generated, it has also brought about its share of opportunism, questionable practices and rampant piracy. One can argue, of course, that this, too, is simply an integral, perhaps even necessary, part of the total equation that has helped demystify and popularize the art of producing and marketing typefaces.
- 6 While we can expect few positive effects to come from the large font discounters, and since the more established professional foundries are somewhat hindered by commercial and practical considerations, it is the smaller "alternative" foundries that have been in a position to undertake

<sup>1</sup> *Eye*, Vol 5, No. 19, 1995, page 3.

<sup>2</sup> *AIGA Journal of Graphic Design*, Vol 14, No. 1, 1996, page 56.



undertake more rigorous experimentation and research. The promotional material that accompany the new releases often claim that experimentation is, in fact, the driving force behind the work. Run by designers instead of managerial or business types, they are less restricted by compromise, deadlines and other commercial interests, and are often in close contact with art schools, where research and experimentation are inherent.

7 However, when looking at the offerings of current alternative foundries, apart from the hundreds of novelty fonts, it is disappointing to find that little in-depth research has been conducted. While most alternative foundries advertise experimentation as their principal concern, if any did take place, seldom have we been presented with either the process or the objective of any serious experimentation. An experiment, after all, is a test whereby the test is often the most interesting aspect of the project. Herbert Bayer's *Universal* typeface, for instance, was the result of various investigations into geometrically drawn letter forms. Although the final font is fraught with contradiction, it is the experiment, the process, that makes it a valuable commodity.

8 In addition, and this is the point of my essay, although many of today's so-called experimental fonts are obvious derivations, rarely is the original typeface credited. In their rush to establish their own identities, foundries often find it expeditious to plunder historical faces without admitting what they've done.

9 Presenting us with only a result and not its process creates two problems. First, it is difficult to consider the motivation behind these new creations to be anything other than personal and financial gain, rendering the adjective "alternative" somewhat presumptuous. And second, in case of the derivative fonts, it renders the distinction between drawing inspiration from the original font and stealing it less clear.

10 That is what this article and the accompanying article by John Downer addresses. It revisits the notion of how we may learn from and build upon existing models by way of homage without relinquishing personal expression, experimentation or other gains.

11 There are, after all, ways to copy, borrow, sample and be inspired without "ripping off" the work of others. This is, in fact, the way type design has traditionally evolved. Much of the progress in type design has been the result of adapting existing typefaces from one technology to another or of satisfying particular demands regarding legibility or economy of usage of a typeface. Jan Tschichold's typeface *Sabon*, for instance, was based on

*Garamond* printing types and was commissioned by a group of German master printers in 1960. The requirements were that it "should be suitable for production in identical form for both mechanical and hand composition" and "suitable for all printing purposes."<sup>3</sup> In addition, for reasons of economy, they asked for it to be 5% narrower than the original *Garamond* model. The work on such adaptations usually has included extensive research into both ownership and history of a font. If necessary, fonts were licensed from one foundry to another. The changes added to an existing font in this process were usually the outcome of a combination of the restrictions presented by new typesetting inventions and the idiosyncrasies or esthetic preferences of the designer or foundry. In any case, most successful adaptations have shown a great deal of respect for, and mention of, the original model. Actually, it is the very research into the source material that makes the new versions so well considered and valuable. Recent examples of this age old method of "borrowing" are ITC's version of *Bodoni* designed by Sumner Stone (with Jim Parkinson, Holly Goldsmith and Janice Prescott Fishman), as well as Robert Slimbach's *Jenson* and Carol Twombly's *Trajan*, which were both released by Adobe, to name but a few.

12 We can continue this tradition today (unless, of course, you plan to make some kind of sociopolitical statement about intellectual property, but that's another story). When using existing fonts as a starting point, we can create electronic drawings from scratch by scanning and tracing printouts, for instance, or by licensing digital source material, as practised and enforced in the world of music. Or we can even create drawings by hand and then scan them into a computer, a method that seems to be rapidly disappearing along with the common decency of crediting source material.

#### Bad Attitude

13 UNAUTHORIZED COPYING OF TYPEFACES is not a recent phenomenon. It is as old a tradition as is type design itself. In the book *Printing Types: Their History, Forms & Use*<sup>4</sup>, published in 1922, author D.B. Updike describes the Bristol-based Fry type foundry as "able but bare-faced copyists," who openly announced in the advertisement for their specimen of 1785 that they had cut types "which will mix with and be totally unknown from the most approved Founts made by the late ingenious artist, William Caslon." The Caslon family was none too flattered and published a poignant "Address to the Public" denouncing the claim made by Fry and which was prefixed to the Caslon specimen of 1785.

14 Of course, the significant difference between copying then

<sup>3</sup> McLean, Ruari, *Jan Tschichold: typographer*, Boston: David R. Godine, 1975.



then and copying now is the ease with which one can do so today. The Fry foundry, according to Updike, "spent some years" in making an imitation of Caslon's type. In today's digital environment it has become virtually effortless. The copying of digital drawings is a quick and easy process that requires little else but the abilities to cut and paste. This would be of little concern if it weren't for the fact that such creations are often put on the market at a fraction of the cost, resulting in unfair competition. Since the copyists do not have the expense of research and development, they can easily outspend the originators in areas of promoting and distributing their fonts.

15 Besides font "piracy," as it is often referred to, digital "sampling" is another favorite but problematic means of creating typefaces. While sampling has generated some remarkable designs, the results often stretch the meaning of the word "original." A sampled font, after all, is a hybrid made up of distinctive parts copied directly from existing digital fonts. While digital sampling affords those not skilled in the traditional methods of creating typefaces the means to do so, these productions often find their way into the commercial font market as foundries struggle to outdo each other by releasing ever greater numbers of fonts. Seldom are original sources mentioned, and because so many novice designers and other "naive" outsiders are involved, issues of copyright infringement are hardly considered. Just to be sure, though, foundries usually enter clauses into their contracts that place the responsibility for infringement of intellectual property squarely in the lap of the designer.

16 Obviously, there exists a great deal of confusion and disagreement regarding issues such as sampling and copying typefaces. What's the difference, for instance, between taking a piece of tracing paper and tracing a printout of an old specimen book and slightly changing it (as was done when Tschichold created *Sabon*), and copying the digital data of an existing digital font and slightly altering the coordinates? The difference, of course, is the amount of work involved in making drawings from scratch, be they digital or analog. In addition, and perhaps more importantly, when fonts became digital, they became protected under software copyright laws, making it illegal to copy and resell the digital code. Regardless of how much you alter it afterwards, it is simply against the law to do so. But it's not impossible to do.

17 One way to borrow legally is to first secure permission. Of course, this requires a fair amount of research and patience, and may result in the responsibility of paying licensing fees to the original source designer.

More importantly, it acknowledges the issue of intellectual property, a highly controversial notion these days, particularly among those who struggle to come up with ideas of their own. Besides commenting on how uncool it is to be uptight about issues of intellectual property, typeface samplers often point to the world of music as an example of how sampling can generate exciting, previously impossible new creations. Any restriction upon usage, they claim, would restrict progress. They usually fail to mention (or are unaware of) one important fact. Within the world of music, it has been well established that if you want to sample something, regardless of length, number of bars, or whatever, you have to get permission. Years ago, after much uncertainty over the issue of sampling, a case went to court and a precedent was set when a judge ruled simply: "*Thou Shalt Not Steal*." Most of the music world now abides by this ruling. There are even companies that specialize in "clearing samples" (the method by which permission for usage of borrowed bits of music is legally secured). Sampling, therefore, is entirely legal; you just have to get permission. By clearing the samples, the person being sampled at least has the opportunity to say "no," or earn a licensing fee for the usage of his or her work. If a sample is denied, the musician goes back to the drawing table.

18 A few years back Brian Schorn, then a design student at Cranbrook, presented us with a typeface that he designed called *Admorph*. The typeface was based on drawings of *Trajan* as found in the book *The Alphabet* by Frederic Goudy. We were attracted to the concept of the font and became interested in releasing it. However, the digital version of the font was created using proprietary digital drawings of *Adobe Trajan* digitized by Carol Twombly. To digitally render a font based on *Trajan* from scratch requires great expertise and craftsmanship. As a shortcut, to put together what was essentially a conceptual font for private use in his thesis project, Brian had used Adobe's font. To release *Admorph* commercially, we figured it would be of considerable help to use Adobe's digital version of *Trajan*. Not only would this speed up the process of manufacturing the font, it would also give us access to some superior digital drawings that would require a great deal of work on our side if we used a method of scanning and tracing the drawings from the book. Neither Brian nor we were up to that challenge. So we wrote Adobe a letter requesting to license the digital drawings of *Trajan* for this project. Adobe considered the request but denied it. The reason Adobe denied our request was unimportant. What is important is that as the creator of digital

<sup>4</sup> Updike, D.B. *Printing Types: Their History, Forms and Use*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1922.



digital data, a designer should be given the opportunity to decline or grant permission. Although we were disappointed, we respected Adobe's decision, and to this date *Admorph* has not been released.

#### Attitude Adjustment

19     How MUCH DO YOU HAVE to change a design in order to call it your own? Obviously, there is no clear answer. Ethics, the rules or standards of conduct governing the members of a profession, is all we have to guide us. Milton Glaser, appropriator extraordinaire, and probably one of the most copied designers alive today, once said something to the effect that he wouldn't appropriate anybody's work unless the originator was dead. In case of doubt, that's not bad advice. Today, thanks to the same computer that has given everybody the ability to create and manufacture fonts, knockoffs or slight deviations can be created, marketed and distributed within a matter of months from the time an original is released. This makes it increasingly difficult for the originator to have a chance to recoup the cost of developing original fonts and making them available.

20     I'm certain that it is the love of typeface design, and not just profitability, that ultimately inspires people to explore new ideas. This deserves our support. As producers of cultural artifacts, graphic designers have a distinct understanding of the issues of copying and intellectual property, and as avid users of type, we're in a unique position to support original ideas born from honest investigation. Remember, if an offer of 1,000 fonts for \$29 sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

21     For examples of a more considered approach to typeface design, check out the ideas and work of the designers featured in John Downer's article. And to show that genuine experimentation in type design still exists, in this issue we published three such projects by Susan LaPorte, Margo Johnson and Stephen Farrell & friends. If there's anything there that you would like to copy, I hope it's their ideology.



# Copping an *Attitude* | PART 2

by JOHN DOWNER

## Introduction

1 LAST AUTUMN, shortly after the publication of an essay I wrote for the verso of an *Emigre* poster announcing the *Not Caslon* font, Rudy VanderLans asked me if I would care to accept another writing assignment, one about typeface revivals in recent times, including notable examples. I decided to begin by asking several of my colleagues for opinions to include in the following article.

2 As the author of all the remarks not expressly attributed to others, it is only fair to state that for many years I have been—paradoxically perhaps—both a sideline critic and a confessed admirer of respectful typeface revivals (and parodies, alike). Admittedly, there has always existed in my reasoning a measure of unresolved tension between what I'd like to see and what I'd like to do, but among professional type designers of my generation, I remain one of a few who has never done a typeface revival or a spoof, despite strong temptations. Being an outsider in this sense has perhaps allowed me a bit more latitude to write objectively about such subjects. It's hard to know. My personal views might strike staunch revivalists as being too idealistic or immoderate. In any event, my comments have been arranged in an effort to acknowledge my biases, to include and combine the considered viewpoints of others, and to present readers of *Emigre* with an interesting assortment of ideas.

## Defining A Revival

3 WHENEVER I REFER TO A DIGITAL TYPEFACE REVIVAL, I am speaking specifically about a modern rendering of an old type design, especially one that originated in an earlier era of typographic history and therefore represents a technology considered obsolete by current typesetting standards. This implies that any digital interpretation of a slightly earlier digital original is not a revival, because digital technology has not yet become obsolete; nor for that matter, have most font formats. Presently, though, type revivals are done primarily in the digital medium, whereas the faces to which they refer were not.

4 My definition of a typeface revival places an emphasis on the chronology and the technology of type, considering style as a minor factor, since there is a range of styles designers use to reinterpret typefaces. Here, a clarification is needed. I do not think of the process of revival as the loose, artistic, gestural celebration of the work of a typographic ancestor. I call that kind of thing "creative modification," because it freely paraphrases rather than translates. Nor do I regard revival as the humble, subservient determination to precisely copy designs of a master. I see that sort of thing as lifeless imitation. A revival, in my book, restores life to a type design from an earlier time in a way that brings forth — in a manner that translates — the unique look and vital essence of the original. It also makes new use of an old collection of ideas, restored to glory through the revivalist's understanding and respect for the original.

Personal Remarks



Personal Remarks

- 5 IN CERTAIN WAYS, I regard a typeface as a work of art. Typeface art, however, is a very specific kind of art. Because it is meant to be utilitarian, it has a purpose that fine art does not have, and so it functions differently. Within this framework, typeface revivals can be categorized as a special kind of typeface art, a kind that serves the reader in one way and the model in another. Of course, definitions of a revival can differ, as definitions of art can differ. The differences can be dramatic. In the art world, for instance, there have long been two opposing camps: Art for Art's Sake and Art for Profit. Among typeface revivalists, too, there are different camps. Although they are admittedly less polarized than the two camps in art, each has assumptions about what is good and what is bad.
- 6 In general, I tend to oppose typeface revivals. I do so, almost always, on professional and pragmatic grounds, but at times on philosophical grounds, as well. Two sets of reasons have compelled me to adopt this position. One touches on skill, the other on savvy.
- 7 In general, revivals are not done well. Most are done by amateur or untrained designers, by designers under orders, or by inept production designers. In each of these cases, there is a handicap present that almost invariably precludes the chance of achieving excellent results. On average, revived typefaces are no more apt to flop than are other typefaces, but many do flop by aspiring or pretending to the greatness of the original type designs on which they are based.
- 8 In general, revivals are not done with intellectual authority. The average revivalist doesn't have adequate means, desire, time, and experience to understand the intentions of the original designer, and in any case, the original intentions are often impossible to ascertain. There is either no one still alive who can say, or not enough history is available. In spite of all this, many who are bent on revival often press on in ignorance and end up making a mess. Use of the original name compounds the offense.
- 9 Nevertheless, there are definitely exceptions. I have chosen some that I think are among the best contemporary examples of successful revivals. Each was done sometime in the past few years by a designer or pair of designers with the right combination of drawing skill, knowledge of type production, artistic discretion, and understanding of type history, to achieve superior results. Consummate professionalism incorporates all these areas of expertise.

Opinions

- 10 EVERY TYPE DESIGNER who contributed comments about his or her typeface revivals has also helped me see that within a relatively small field of professionals, there is room for significant differences in thinking and methods of designing. What seems evident is that a type designer's experience in the profession, combined with such factors as age, personality, attitude, and sense of history, contribute to the production of his or her typefaces in subtle ways.
- 11 One of the most learned and respected type designers of our time, Matthew Carter, contributed comments about three of his typeface revivals, but his remarks refer principally to *Big Caslon*, a display face he modeled on specimens of type cut by the 18th-century English typefounder, William Caslon. *Big Caslon* was published in 1994 by Carter & Cone Type Inc. *ITC Galliard*, also designed by Matthew Carter, was based on a group of typefaces cut in France in the 16th century by Robert Granjon.
- 12 Matthew writes: → There seem to me to be degrees of revival that differ in their faithfulness to the original, ranging from the most literal 'warts and all' to woolliest 'improvisation on a theme...'. Of the historically derived faces I've done, *Big Caslon* probably comes closest to having one particular typeface as its source. There are three sizes of *Caslon* that could reasonably be used as models for a 'big' version, 72, 60 and 48 point. The 60 point struck me as having the largest share of the characteristics that I liked in the trio, so it shows up more than the other two

Big  
Caslon



other two in *Big Caslon*. If I had found all of the qualities I admire in the 60 point, *Big Caslon* would have been a purer derivative of it; but as it stands there are bits and pieces of the 72 and 48 point present together, of course, with much that is apocryphal, like it or not, since Caslon's font was so much smaller than ours.

13 → For me, the object of designing a historical revival is not to make a pious reconstruction but to capture an essence, which must involve interpretation and synthesis. Whether it involves improvement is another matter. I could not aspire to improve on any of the originals that I have revived, except in the sense of concentrating into one typeface the best qualities of a larger body of work — bringing it into sharper focus, as it were. I have used the word 'anthology' to describe the relationship of *ITC Galliard* to the types of Robert Granjon, because it seemed to me as editor that the author had scattered his best letters over several faces: my hope was to integrate these into a single design. A face I've done recently, called *Miller*, has an even more diffuse source in a whole genus of types, *Scotch Roman*. Here I couldn't find a single face, or a single punchcutter, to represent the epitome of Scotchness. I had to browse a large field.

14 → I consider that designing a historical revival is an exercise in understanding, and that trying to understand the model is really the only responsibility the designer has. Making that effort will probably result in an interpretation that manages to steer a course between obsessive devotion and outright sacrilege, equally bad in my view. ←

15 Realizing that working from a source entrenched in history can ultimately lead to either a choice of two evils or to unmapped middle ground seems common. Through his work on various revivals in recent years, type designer and connoisseur Jonathan Hoefler has discovered one such dichotomy in trying to follow a model while striving to make a workable, readable digital font. I asked him about his recent typeface revival called *HTF Mazarin*, a digital font based on the 15th-century type of Nicholas Jenson. First used in 1470, Jenson's seminal cut is undoubtedly the most studied, admired, and revived of all the surviving printed examples of early roman types.

16 Jonathan observes: → The problem is that historical artifacts aren't stable; they exist in a sort of quantum state in which they're at once ideal and flawed until the moment one chooses to revive them. And in fact, I don't think they can be either replicated or modified with much success. One route gets you a museum piece, unserviceable to modern readers and fraught with nostalgic overtones. The other introduces anachronisms, which corrupt or even obscure the original design. To me, more important than the virtues of a historical source is the dialogue between the original artifact and its restoration, in which the intentions of both designers are articulated. In this way, a historical revival can be thought of more as an interpretation than a replica; the aim becomes not to imitate a type's forms, but to convey its spirit. William Morris interpreted the type on which *Mazarin* is based, as did Bruce Rogers, as has Robert Slimbach, and in comparing these designs it becomes clear that each of these designers saw something very different in the original, making each of their creations unique. ←

17 Backing up a bit to the subject of understanding, mentioned by Matthew Carter in paragraph 14, above, we can see that today there is definitely a need for type designers to take the time necessary to explore the historical typefaces they intend to revive. Ironically, typeface revival is one area where novice type designers often choose to begin. I think many newcomers mistakenly believe that because the foundation appears to be in place, the rest of the work will be easier than if there were no foundation at all. A revival is no easy assignment. It takes skill and expertise. To do a *good* historical revival requires even more skill and expertise. It's a tough job for a beginner.

18 Beating the odds in exactly this sense were two talented and well-educated young designers, Andrea Fuchs and her former teacher Fred Smeijers of The Netherlands, when they revived

Mazarin



they revived *Nobel*, a typeface designed by S.H. de Roos around 1930. Under license from the Dutch company Tetterode, successor to the original founder Lettergieterij Amsterdam, a digital font foundry called Dutch Type Library currently has distribution rights to the many weights, styles, and variations of the digital version mentioned in the following description by Andrea Fuchs: → I had no idea what an amount of work that project would be. But I desperately

wanted to do it. I fell in love with *Nobel*. Initially, our digital *Nobel* wasn't made for sale. I wanted to use it for some designs of mine and I was only thinking of using some weights. Much later, I had the idea of doing a complete revival and selling it. But sharing credit was never a problem for us. ←

The history of *Nobel* was researched before the revival commenced. Andrea continues to explain: → When we started the projects, we first had only lead models to refer to. We printed all we had on a little press and then digitized the best letters in Ikarus. Later we went on, working in Fontographer. While working on this first set of letters, we found a lot of old type specimens from Tetterode from different years. We discovered that Tetterode itself changed the design of *Nobel* twice! They wrote in the foreword of the type specimen, around 1940: 'We thought that it was time to slightly change our popular typeface NOBEL to bring it more into modern times.' They mainly replaced the sharp edges in some of the letters. Later, around 1957, they updated the typeface again. At this time, they replaced all the sharp edges and made them flat. In other printing shops, we've found even more variety in different *Nobel* versions of certain letters. So what is *Nobel*? You might also remember that *Berthold Grotesk* (around 1913) was quite similar to *Nobel*. Without accusing De Roos of simply stealing it, we see the difference between the two is minimal. So who's the author? At one point, we decided to combine all the good *Nobel* qualities we found. ←

19 From this last statement, it is evident that combining the best qualities of several examples or states of a single typeface or personal style can become part of the job of doing a revival. Synthesis is unavoidable, often deliberate. Sometimes, however, a type designer consciously resists the urge to blend or combine prominent elements when doing a revival in order to maintain the integrity of a particular design.

20 Representing this approach is American born type designer Jane Patterson who worked on typeface revivals for many clients in the U.S. before moving to Italy. Since becoming the president of Design Lab, a digital type foundry in Milan, she has been involved in several typeface revivals, most of them for the private use of her clients in Europe. She writes,

→ When creating a revival typeface, I am definitely most concerned with preserving the original design. Too many designers make the mistake of allowing their creative impulses to flourish when doing a revival. This is partly due to the fact that designers by nature are egotistical and must put their creative mark on every project they touch, but a revival is not about creativity. It's about the faithful reproduction of an existing creation. ←

21 This sense of faithfulness and fastidiousness can be observed in Jane's attitude toward procedural matters, as well. Her cognizance of the ethical choices that she must make when she undertakes – or declines to undertake – revivals of typefaces that have not yet lapsed into the public domain keeps her in safe territory and raises the moral value of her work. In short, she follows the rules in exemplary fashion.

22 → One can never do enough research when making a revival. I often find that there is very little information about the history of a particular typeface. This makes determining ownership difficult, especially when there may be several other typefaces that look very much like the one being researched. At this point, one wants to understand more about the designer, where the work was done, who published the fonts that comprise the typeface, whether the fonts were licensed or stolen, etc. Even fonts that are licensed properly can have very sordid histories. The more research, the better decision one can make about producing a font or not! ←

The business

*Nobel Regular*. Designed by Andrea Fuchs and Fred Smeijers

Nobel Regular



- 23 The business of designing a special version of a historical typeface that has been previously revived may go beyond the definition of a historical revival. A custom font of this nature is often a cross between the original face and one or more of its progeny, and can be seen as a variant of an existing revival. Additional considerations apply, as Jane Patterson explains: → In most cases, I have no reservations about undertaking revival projects, simply because I understand the rules involved. The average custom font project that I receive from a client is for the production of a font that already exists in digital form but fails to meet the client's needs. So first I research the source or sources of the font and whether the foundry, copyright, or family foundation still exists. Then I ask the foundation or foundry for permission to produce a custom font. Normally, consent is given without any problem as long as the client purchases the font, if it already exists in digital form, in order to obtain a font license agreement. Only then will I start to create the custom version of the font. In very rare cases, such as adding old style figures to a font, will I modify the digital version. I prefer to start from scratch and draw, space, and kern each character to match my client's specifications. This is usually done from scanned artwork (generally from photocomposition) provided by the client. There are really no drawbacks to doing a project like this, especially if you have done your homework correctly, because in most cases it can be very rewarding and a real pleasure to bring back to life a digital typeface that was created for lead, photo, or wood type technologies by one of the type design masters before our time. I always find it a learning experience. ←
- 24 Matthew Carter, too, honors predecessors when he writes, → We all stand on the shoulders of giants. I feel morally obligated to acknowledge that, and to give most of the credit where most of it is due. But I hope not to play the sedulous ape to Granjon, Caslon, Figgins, whomever. Interpretation should also be acknowledged or admitted, and it involves certain risks: blame if it misfires, and no doubt the wrath of ghosts jealous of their reputations. I suppose I see myself more as a continuator than as a conservationist — or plagiarist — in the sense of being a designer who prolongs the useful life of something undeservedly set aside by changes of fashion or technology. ←

# Hard Times Regular

- 25 Breaking with the notion of overhauling a typeface that has been taken out of commission by a turn of events in history is designer and educator Jeffery Keedy. Instead of looking to past centuries for a typeface to reconstruct, he chose a well-known, ubiquitous 20th-century text face, *Times Roman*. Although neither he nor I regard his typeface, *Hard Times*, as a revival *per se*, he offers interesting points about designing a typeface that has a recognizable source.
- 26 → Most typefaces refer to previous typefaces but not usually so directly. *Hard Times* is a retrofit that gives *Times Roman* a hard time by showing the wear and tear of time. However, *Hard Times* is a complete reinterpretation — not just a few serifs knocked off here and there. The contrast of the thicks and thins has been reduced to counterbalance the asymmetry of the serifs.

*Hard Times Regular*. Designed by Jeffery Keedy.

SADLY, there will probably never be a way for the average type user to gain a clear understanding of the complexities of the type business, especially in the U.S., where there is little legal protection except for the trademarked name. This bleak forecast should not be allowed to dampen desires to set things right.

However, we must be prepared for the debate. Preparation involves getting acquainted with the prevailing arguments. Some of those arguments are nearly worn out. If you look closely at the ways type manufacturers have attempted to justify their behavior in the past, you begin to see holes. That is cause for optimism. The next step is to zero in.

Traditionally, there have been several reasons and a multitude of excuses routinely given to explain, rationalize, or justify a particular case of typeface "appropriation." Some are valid, some are not. Let's examine a short list of the most common, one by one.

*This is how it has always been done* (as a justification for taking, imitating, or copying without permission). The statement is true. Evidence is overwhelming. Individuals have stolen from other individuals, manufacturers from manufacturers, and so on. Piracy has a long, long history. Perhaps pirates have tradition at heart, not just profit.

*Everybody in this business does it* (as a justification for taking, imitating, or copying without permission). The statement is not true, but it is very close. Typefounders have never agreed on who is entitled to what and for how long when the subject of alphabet design is being discussed. The same goes for designers, manufacturers, and publishers. A few are clean, the rest are not. Never have I seen reference to any formal document establishing this as an accepted practice, but I have heard the quote again and again. *It is not illegal* (as a justification for taking, imitating, or copying the look of a typeface without permission). In some countries this is false. Here in the U.S. the statement is true, except in situations where protected digital data or computer software code was stolen. In such cases it is incumbent on the plaintiff to prove



to prove that theft occurred.  
*We have just as much right as the next person* (as a justification for taking or copying a predigital typeface). The statement is true. There is no law in the U.S. to prevent this. We all have equal protection under the non law. *We have our customers' interests at heart or We are meeting a need* (as justifications for nearly anything). The statements both tread on thin ice and attempt to cover a host of sins. Reasons like these make me nervous. Implicit in both is the assumption that if the public can be made to see that the statements of the provider focus on the common good, and mention nothing of the monetary reward, then their intentions must be pure and benevolent.  
*Most folks don't know the difference* (as a justification for peddling a cheap imitation, or fibbing in advertising). The statement is true. Buyer, beware.  
*How dare you call that typeface yours?*  
*It's ours! We stole it fair and square* (provided as comic relief).

## Gararond Bold

The modifications I made are very indiscreet. Each letter is irregular and looks ugly at a big size. But my point was to use it primarily for text.

serifs. And soft oval forms have been added to contrast the hard edges. I have also introduced some elements from *Plantin*, the precursor to *Times Roman*, thus reclaiming its past and catching up to the present all at once — it's the 'Dorian Gray' of typefaces. ↔

- 27 Jeffery Keedy's distinctive tongue-in-cheek reflections help demonstrate that pure wit has its place in type design. Another designer who has an unusual slant on a famous type from the past is Pierre di Sciullo of Paris, whose sophistication and cheekiness as type designer and *graphiste* are as enlightening as they are entertaining. *Gararond*, his roman and italic homage to the Elzevirian printing types of the 16th-century Parisian punchcutter, Claude Garamond, is a soft, flexible, rounded-off and serifless text face, now available from Agfa. In contrasting his *Gararond* with the more minimal, orthogonal typefaces he designed earlier in his career, Pierre di Sciullo writes, ↔ It was natural for me to choose an opposite direction. For *Gararond*, I used only curves. I chose *Garamond* as the basis for my design for the following reasons: a) *Aesthetics*. *Garamond* was originally a punched letter. A punchcutter can file the punch that strikes the copper and use the tool to determine the axes of the letters. I was amused to interpret this typeface with today's tool, Fontographer, and I used an arbitrary constraint — only the curve points — to assume the technical break. b) *Polemics*. You can use all the arguments of modernist/postmodernist/neotraditionalist, etc., but you still will not be able to prove the superiority of the lineal letters over the Elzevir letters. Is green superior to red? *Gararond* is an Elzevir-lineal, or lineal-Elzevirian typeface. This is my way of telling you that I really don't care. c) *Utility*. I didn't find a satisfying version of *Garamond* on the market. Most type designers have crushed the proportions of *Garamond* in a way that I can't accept. They seem to have lost themselves in picturesque or typographic details that do not interest me. The essential features of this typeface are elegance, courage and irregularity. d) *Love*. I adore the version of *Garamond* shown in Marius Audin's book. I am crazy about the italic *Garamond*. It is a harsh and bold jewel that has rhythm and accidents. ↔

- 28 The originality of *Gararond* is unmistakable, but many strong likenesses to the *Garamond* model are remarkable in seemingly serendipitous ways. I asked Pierre di Sciullo to describe his intentions and to discuss the modifications he chose to make during the design process. In the following passage he summarizes his experiment.

↔ I first measured the proportions of the upper and lower case and ascenders descenders of a 24 point *Garamond de l'Université*. Then I began drawing using Fontographer with a version of *ITC Garamond* pasted in the background. This made me unhappy, since I hate *ITC Garamond*. So I erased the background and started fresh by looking at the *Garamond de l'Université*. I then decided to take off the serifs and emphasize the form of the letter by prolongation of the curves. The modifications I made are very indiscreet. Each letter is irregular and looks ugly at a big size. But my point was to use it primarily for text. I used *Gararond* to set a complete book and it worked correctly. ↔

- 29 Restoration of a text typeface to the purpose for which the original version was created (in this case the setting of a book) highlights the enchantment of a revival — even one, like *Gararond*, that is unfaithful to the details of individual characters in the model but reminiscent of its original appearance when used in text. *Gararond* is worth comparing with other typefaces that directly aspire to the name *Garamond* to see the differences and similarities, and to see which of them is closest to the original *Garamond* proportions.

- 30 Returning to the subject of faithful historical typeface revivals, and comparing centuries-old models with present day ones, type designer Jonathan Hoefler offers a couple of germane and pragmatic considerations. Noting that he sees two separate kinds of typeface revival, he writes, ↔ I think there are many differences between the revival of a historic artifact and the digitization of a modern design, not the least of which is a question of ownership. This is one reason I don't tend to involve myself in creating digital translations of recent typefaces ('recent'



('recent' meaning anything after the onset of modernism; that is, that any typeface was 'designed' in response to a desire for new styles rather than 'made' out of a need for new printing types). ↔

31 The distinction between referring to an ancient model and a rather recent one provides a chance to look again at an example of a revival of a 20th-century typeface I picked for discussion, and to share a comment offered by Dutch designer Fred Smeijers. I asked if he and colleague Andrea Fuchs were concerned more about preserving the exact appearance of the model for *Nobel*, or more about making discreet modifications that they believed would be seen as improvements. Fred responded this way: → Right, I am concerned with preserving the exact appearance of the model by making discreet modifications. These slight modifications yield an average result because we want the best for all sizes with one master. So I do not always think of these modifications as improvements, no sir! Personally, I am convinced that you need at least three masters to get the best result in print. This depends of course on the character of the type design. For a very delicate serif, more masters do have a clear effect, while blunt industrial sans serifs are hardly worth such an effort. ↔

32 To conclude this sampling of thoughts from other designers, I would like to mention one more revival of a 20th-century typeface that I think is a special case. Veteran type designers David Quay and Freda Sack of London have revived a typeface alphabet that was drawn by the late typographer Jan Tschichold but, in the words of the co-designers of the *Architype Tschichold* font, the original design "was never released as a full typeface for others to use." Because of this, the designers needed to take extra precautions to get the digital version right. They explain, → We had original references to work from. We enlarged the reference to 100mm x-height. In all revival work, there is now a major decision to make, which affects the whole outcome of the recreation: the actual weight of the face. Was the original over- or underinked to begin with? Has the enlargement over- or underexposed the original? We think we determined it exactly; intuition and experience also played a big part.

33 → An accurate grid of all the major components was then drawn on a sheet of graph paper and from this we drew each letter by hand on tracing paper. In many cases, several letters could be drawn out of the same character because of the geometrical make up of the design. The letters were then digitized using Ikarus mainframe software. Only slight modifications were made to Tschichold's letters; for instance, horizontal strokes were made slightly lighter in weight for optical balancing. We also had to add characters to make a modern working font. However, we did not add capitals, as this was conceived as a universal alphabet. ↔

34 The description of a modern production process, provided above, gives a clue to the kinds of considerations designers and redesigners must take into account when adapting a type design for use in a technology never known to the original designer.

#### Historical Interlude: Marriage

35 DURING THE PERIOD from about 1880 to 1980, when type design for machine composition was married to the enterprise of manufacturing and selling typesetting equipment, there existed at least a plausible excuse for changing the proportions of individual typographic characters in the process of adapting an existing type design to a particular composing system. Each manufacturer had a different system that it was trying to make the type designs conform to. The same excuse was used when photo typesetting, and later, digital typesetting, took over. Because each manufacturer's machine was made differently, every adaptation of an earlier standard typeface design offered for the machine had to, and was expected and allowed by typographers to, vary from the model somewhat. Moreover, there was no way for each manufacturer to both accurately identify and legally protect its specially adapted faces, except to come up

Architype  
Tschichold



to come up with a name not already in use and seek a trademark on that name. This partly explains why so many lookalike faces have different names and why so many dissimilar interpretations of traditional faces go by similar names. The other part of the explanation is that manufacturers were taking typeface designs from each other. No sooner had one manufacturer's typeface become popular and profitable, than a competitor would come out with a knockoff, often with a similar sounding name, thereby tricking the public and carelessly contributing to the chaos.

#### Historical Interlude: Divorce

36 WITHIN RECENT MEMORY, one strong indication that the activity of manufacturing text type was splitting from the business of manufacturing typesetting equipment came in the area of marketing, not technology. In the 1970s, the success of International Typeface Corporation demonstrated that the business of licensing type, without making type designs specific to any one piece of equipment, could be undertaken to provide both new and redesigned faces to a variety of typesetting equipment manufacturers. Through its licensing agreements with its subscribers and distributors, ITC was able to disseminate not only its original designs, but those it licensed from others as well. Mergenthaler Linotype Company, for example, which had commissioned Matthew Carter's typeface, *Galliard*, released it in 1978 but licensed it a few years later to ITC. The relaunch by ITC made *Galliard* available to a score of typesetting equipment manufacturers that were unable to obtain it the first time it appeared.

37 The next signs that the type business was about to re-establish full independence came when the Macintosh, together with PostScript, and laser printers, were introduced. This combination proved to be a popular and inexpensive alternative to other methods of setting type. At that time, in the mid 1980s, the business of manufacturing typesetting equipment was still fairly healthy, and Bitstream, one of the first independent digital typefoundries in the U.S., began to accomplish on the technical side what ITC had accomplished on the marketing side: namely, it broadly licensed its proprietary digital type (not just analog artwork or subcontracted digital fonts) directly to equipment manufacturers. But the demise of the type machine industry rapidly became foreseeable as desktop publishing grew. Today, the majority of companies that formerly made typesetting equipment are either out of business or they're in the type business only. In fact, about all that's left of most of them is a library of typeface designs. They have come to be, as type foundries were before typesetting equipment was invented, servants to a segment of the graphic arts industry over which they exercise practically no control. For typefounding there has been, effectively, a return to the past — with many small typefoundries flourishing as their predecessors did over 100 years ago.

38 Type designers, type manufacturers and type publishers alike, no longer have the main excuse for stealing they had used for over a century, since making a typeface is no longer inextricably linked to the typeface maker's equipment. As type designers, we do not manufacture Macintosh computers. I thus conclude that type designers, type manufacturers and type publishers who continue to steal from one another do so either for the sake of stealing or out of pure ignorance. Oh, yeah, and one more possible reason: profit.

#### Private Property

39 THERE IS NOW, MORE THAN EVER, considerable confusion among novice type designers, and type users on the whole, as to which typefaces from the past are legitimately in the public domain and which are not. The issue of ownership is not a trivial matter and would take a lot of effort to fully explain. All I can do here is provide an overview.

40 Any typeface designed, say as long ago as World War II, could still very well have an owner or a claimant to ownership, depending on the copyright and patent laws of the country in which

Not all typefaces portrayed by manufacturers as authentic revivals are genuine recreations. By my count, poor imitations outnumber accurate facsimiles. I see far more knockoffs than revivals.

Traditionally, this important distinction is one that manufacturers have cleverly chosen to overlook when attempting to either identify or conceal sources. Telling the public a story seems to go with selling typefaces. Typical advertising tricks like word switches and discreetly placed modifiers or "additives" are par for the course. It's part of a con game.

Regrettably, the bulk of promotional prose written expressly to accompany the release of mass market typeface revivals emanates from type hypesters, not type historians. Rarely have ad copywriters demonstrated the kind of convincing, insightful, authoritative knowledge of the subject that type scholars possess. On the whole, there is a profound lack of credibility among writers who hire out for publicity assignments. Promotional ad copy churned out by marketing personnel for the consumption of potential type users is typically not only shallow and contrived, it's often erroneous. One example should suffice.

ITC Garamond was a series released in 1975 as what many typophiles believed was a revival of the types of the sixteenth-century Parisian punchcutter, Claude Garamond. The ITC faces were intended to appeal to advertising typographers, many of whom by then had bowed to the fashion of using styles that formerly would have been regarded as text types for the purpose of display. Text type was, starting in the 70s, being redrawn to feature an extremely large x height (ITC's virtual mandate), and was spaced so tightly for composition that overlapping letters became the norm. Indeed, the drastic "reproportioning" and "refitting" rendered the new interpretations more trendy for display typography, but inappropriate for continuous reading.

Such "publicity types," as printing historian D.B. Updike contemptuously referred to display monstrosities of this ilk in his landmark, two volume work, *Printing Types: Their History, Forms, and Use*<sup>1</sup>, had traditionally

<sup>1</sup> Updike, D.B. *Printing Types: Their History, Forms and Use*, Cambridge Harvard University Press, 1922.



which the face was produced or published. The older the typeface, the more likely that by now it has fallen into the public domain. But date-of-issue is not always the determining factor. For practical purposes, I would choose the same period of time as a safe margin of error that is set as the period of time most standard typeface contracts between designer/developer and publisher/distributor run until term. This is either 60 years or 50 years plus the number of years that pass until death of the designer, whichever of the two comes first. To reiterate, this is merely the measure I would choose as an estimate. A better rule of thumb is to say, "Find out for sure." I would never attempt to draw a conclusion, myself, before hiring a lawyer with a good knowledge of intellectual property cases to do a thorough search. Any form of inaction in this respect might create the appearance of negligence, impropriety, or lack of respect for the artistic efforts of others. It is safe to assume that if something has value, it probably has an owner. From both an ethical and a legal standpoint, the best assumption is that *everything* in this world belongs to *somebody*.

#### More Moral Musings

- 41 OCCASIONALLY, I WONDER about the current state of affairs in light of history and technology. Is a desire to modernize justification for aggressively and indiscriminately combing the past? Does new technology singularly qualify designers to replicate the old typeface treasures? Are designers who claim to be reviving typefaces primarily to add to the achievements of western civilization actually performing a bigger service to their public or their pocketbooks?
- 42 Here, I hasten to make an important distinction, based on what I see. It is an issue concerning quality and quantity. For the sake of comparison, I'll cite disparate examples.
- 43 A careful typeface revival is worthy of the attention of typophiles. I love to study a tastefully drawn, respectful revival that clearly reflects the noble qualities of an earlier typographic masterpiece. A work resulting from this kind of endeavor clearly has an honorable place in the history and serious study of type. It also provides valuable lessons in appreciating nuances of design.
- 44 By contrast, I hate to see, and utterly deplore, wholesale misappropriation, corruption, and bastardization of popular (or formerly popular) type designs or other published alphabets as a high volume, mass production activity undertaken for, and perpetuated by, financial and competitive gain. Typefaces made in this way do not qualify as genuine revivals, assertions to the contrary notwithstanding. Behavior of this sort is motivated by greed, and is not the way good revivals come about. In spite of this, some of today's less enlightened production designers elect to make a career of reviving to excess — ostensibly under the strange delusion that they are making valiant, long term contributions to the art of preservation. In effect they are contributing, albeit unwittingly, to public confusion over authenticity.
- 45 I have noticed, from my remote lookout, that merely possessing the means to salvage historical type designs is sometimes taken by font producers as a license to scavenge whatever has gone before, whether it is good material for a revival or not. This has never seemed quite right to me. I advocate letting relics remain relics. Relics do well in retirement, despite their lack of productivity. Besides, typefaces do not automatically become extinct upon being forced into disuse by a newer technology. They simply become dormant. Desirable ones always manage to get reactivated, sooner or later, so there should be no need to fear they may be permanently lost. Seldom is salvation as urgent as the most fiscally minded reactivators would have us believe. Unfortunately, the zealots of progress often commence the reactivation process — in the name of revival — before they allow the original type designers sufficient opportunity (a period of several years) to update the volume of work they created prior to the arrival

traditionally been regarded by fine printers as types of the lowliest sort. Publicity types were for job printers. Considering ITC Garamond in this context, one has only to read the blurb in the specimen booklet to see how ludicrous the rhetoric can get. The following is an extract that I find so implausible, I question what the writer believed was to be gained. "The 16th century classic Garamond design became one of the world's most widely used typefaces in the first half of this century. Following American Type Founders' introduction of it to the American market in 1917, metal versions were drawn for all the typesetting machines: Intertype, Linotype, Ludlow, and Monotype.

But one thing is certain today: if Claude Garamond were designing his illustrious type for photographic and electronic typesetting machines, he would not simply duplicate the face he cut in metal over four centuries ago. To this end, Tony Stan has, in effect, rephrased the famous Garamond flavor in late 20th century terms. The niceties, the taste, the details, the fit, the larger x height, and the weight graduations of ITC Garamond measure up to today's new typographic standards, yet nowhere has Stan deviated from the genial flow of line so characteristic of this distinguished letter."<sup>2</sup> (And on it goes, but you get the gist of the praise.)

A fair comparison of a folio printed in Claude Garamond's roman and italic text types during the Golden Age of printing in France and a page set in ITC's "rephrased" version continues to leave me wondering how any conscientious type designer with an assignment to do an interpretation could be this deviant. Perhaps part of the answer lies in the fact that the late Tony Stan, then of Photo-Lettering, Inc., was being directed by the marketing faction of ITC's typeface review committee, which was then interested in catering designs mainly to the tastes of major clients in the world of advertising. Another possibility is that Stan may have been referring primarily to the 20th-century Garamond revivals mentioned in ITC's blurb. In either case, what resulted from Stan's efforts was a series of faces so remote from "the genial flow of line" in Garamond's original types that certain aspects of it seem to run counter to Garamond's personal aesthetic.

Of course it is quite safe for ITC to speculate that if Garamond were to design type for machine composition, "he would not simply duplicate

<sup>2</sup> From ITC Garamond, Specimen booklet, 1977.



arrival of the new technology. Never mind that the original designers may not always want to update their typefaces, or be forced to watch as others provide the service for them over their objections. On the whole, I find this tendency on the part of reactivators to be opportunistic at one pole and officious at the other. Occasionally rushing to the rescue of disabled printing types seems fine if it is done for the sake of demonstrating methods of lifesaving or resuscitation; but let's forget about heroism as a vocation.

46 If the aim, expressed or implied, is to perform public or community service, then the mission should be to serve the public or community *pro bono publico*. If the historical source for a typeface revival is public domain, then designers and publishers who use the material should reciprocate. Contributing fonts, along with a modest share of the proceeds from them, to public libraries, historical societies, and printing museums would be a good start, but this form of philanthropy fails to get much support from many major type companies.

47 Yet, it seems reasonable to maintain that authoritative typeface revivals, drawn from historical models in the public domain, should be made as accessible as are reference books at the public library — available for everyone to use free of charge, but for no one person to check out, or smuggle out. Private use in one's home or office would still require that a user's license be purchased from the owner, as is now the case. In the end, the concept could become only a practice, not a law or obligation, for any revivalist could deny using a free source or refuse to comply. Whatever practices emerge in the future of the font business, there will surely be a continuing debate about fairness and honor in the profession of type design.

FINIS

## Type Rephrasing & Type Rephrasing Rhetoric

# ITC Garamond

duplicate the face he cut in metal over four centuries ago." (As a matter of correction, I should interject that Garamond cut many faces, not just one roman and one italic.) Since none of the faces he cut could possibly be used in their original form on a modern photo typesetting or digital typesetting machine, obviously none would. This much of ITC's speculation is true by default; there is no way he could do otherwise within the framework of the hypothetical situation given. However, it does not logically follow that Claude Garamond would therefore have severely disfigured and distorted his elegant book faces, or any other faces done in his name, the way Tony Stan did.

For that matter, it is impossible to say for sure exactly how Garamond's typographic tastes would have been affected had he lived in the late twentieth century, even if we accept the assumption that he would choose to overhaul his faces for modern typesetting technology. Contrary to the ITC assertion, this is far from being "certain today." Moreover, it is absurd to think that Claude Garamond would (for any sane reason) have strayed from his lifelong interest in creating types

for serious, scholarly, book printing and turned his hand to the gimmicky business of display typography. Any writer with the slightest knowledge of Garamond and his work would have dismissed such a notion before committing it to print. Also, if ITC had truly appreciated the "niceties, the taste, the details, the fit" of Garamond's original types, they would more than likely have had second thoughts about ordering or allowing Stan to drastically exaggerate the x-height, alter the character proportions, expand the weight graduations, regularize the slant of the italic, and then name the result "Garamond." It's a toss-up whether the blurb or the redrawing is worse. Each is a travesty on its own. Together, they constitute nothing less than a mockery of traditional typographic sensibility.

In my estimation, the previous example points to the important relationship between the accuracy of a typeface revival and the accuracy of what its proponents write or say about it. Whether we are talking about the area of text or display, publicity written for publicity types is usually written by publicity types. I find this a distasteful arrangement, short on scholarship and long on salesmanship. Readers should note,

for example, that the blurb did not actually claim that the types of Garamond had been revived. The blurb said "rephrased." It did not actually say that their product was a true Garamond. It said "Garamond flavor," as if it could be equated with new, low-fat, vanilla flavor, non-dairy ice cream.

This is ITC's approach, even today. It is obsessed with mass marketing. Even in situations when writers of typeface ads do not have deceit in mind, the promotional copy is written in such a generic mode that it could conceivably apply to practically any face in their collection. It's as easy as switching words: "a contemporary blend of striking originality and classical proportions" could become, "a striking blend of classical originality and contemporary proportions" and the time after that, "a classic blend of contemporary banality in striking proportions." It seems as if there is seldom a grasp of typeface origins. However, the most unfortunate aspect is that ad writers, in their haste to "educate the public," often fail to take the time required to inform themselves first. As a consequence, the collective understanding of type and its history is being diminished, not increased.



**Retrospective: High Performance Design in a Smog-Restricted Era**  
 Bob Smartner graciously agreed to write this brief retrospective of Brand Design/House Industries. As a former crew chief, head mechanic and shop steward of Brand Design/House Industries, he brings a unique perspective to this company's young but already illustrious history. Bob is now a freelance writer who covers the design and automotive industries. He resides in Berma, Ohio with his wife, Bernadette, and is the proud owner of the award-winning Super Riegel Camaro.



1.



2.

by BOB SMARTNER I first met Andy Cruz and Rich Roat back in '93 when they started building some of their first custom jobs in Wilmington, Delaware. Joined soon thereafter by partner and expert custom technician Al Merce, they embarked on a journey that took them from the modest beginnings of a detail and custom design shop to the parts, service and detailing empire that they are today. Starting with a single client, Calumet Carton Company, Andy, Allen and Rich pulled Calumet's plain jane rock-stock marketing pieces into their garage, bolted up some innovative printing techniques, and rolled out some of that season's most interesting work. In less than a year, Brand Design's work became a hit at national shows, van ins and with the design press. Both the automotive and design press called them "an overnight sensation," and *Rod 'n Race* magazine said that they were "taking the automotive & design industries to the true limits of customization."

Three-foot trophies with little cars on top were not enough, though, for the ambitious Brand partners. Even with national notoriety, Brand just couldn't seem to find a steady flow of cars for its radical customization techniques — folks just weren't willing to trust the free-spirited artisans with their showroom stockers. With the track, show and press successes of the Calumet rods, Brand still couldn't attract

1.  
Sweepstakes.  
Poster for Custom  
Papers Group.

2.  
Type Powered by .  
Brochure (inside  
panel) for House  
Industries.

3.  
Sweepstakes  
Poster (back panel)  
for Custom Papers  
Group.

4.  
Treehouse & Roadhouse.  
Digital typefaces for  
House Industries.

Treehouse  
ROADHOUSE

4.

3.







5.

**House Street Van**  
SMOG LEGAL IN ALL 50 STATES

**FONT KIT**

**IT'S EASY!**  
Stand at your home stock levels by using the HOUSE STREET VAN KIT. You'll have the van in your design, over the top of your design, and the design will be in the van. You'll have the van in your design, over the top of your design, and the design will be in the van.

**YOU DON'T NEED ANY SPECIAL ART TALENT...**  
Just use your own sense of style and the effect will be yours. The kit gives you designs to use on the van, and the van will be yours.

**YOU'VE SEEN THEM**  
and wonder how you could have one with the body design for the Super Riegel Caravan. They're right here!

**YOU'VE ASKED FOR THEM...NOW YOU CAN ROCK 'EM!**

**YOUR KIT INCLUDES**

- ★ A 1/9 SCALE STREET VAN BOX (reusable)
- ★ THE EXCLUSIVE STREET VAN T-SHIRT (w/metallflake)
- ★ AND BONUS COLOR STREET VAN STICKERS

**MACHHOUSE** ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

**SLICKHOUSE** ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

**HAULHOUSE** ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

**TRICKHOUSE** ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

**VANtasyHOUSE** ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

**POWERHOUSE** ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

**SIX FONTS PLUS T-SHIRT & STICKERS**  
LET MORE and more FREE up your Street Van. "MACH HOUSE" and "SLICK HOUSE" are STREET VAN. "HAULHOUSE" and "TRICKHOUSE" are STREET VAN. "VANtasyHOUSE" and "POWERHOUSE" are STREET VAN.

**Only \$150**

6.



7.

the steady flow of customers. Sure, they could have taken to simple detail jobs, striping and general maintenance, but it just wasn't their style. The winter of 93/94 was also approaching, the garage wasn't heated and using an acetylene torch to cook grilled cheese sandwiches on the fender of a parted out '69 GTO was starting to lose its charm. That's when the partners dreamed up House Industries, which was essentially a series of semi-custom, user-installable design fonts - basically a series of low buck fix-ups for virtually any street stocker.

The beginning of House Industries was the publication of a card showing 12 simple but unique fonts. Originally targeted for the "big three" ad agencies, body shapers, small custom painting shops, shade tree mechanics and record company art departments, the House Industries product line gained industry wide acceptance by amateurs and professionals alike. House Industries and Brand Design now complement and promote each other - you can buy the bolt-on parts from House Industries, but if you want that true custom look and unparalleled performance, you really need to pull into the Brand Design customization center. It also works the other way - the super high performance pieces that Brand cranks out of its shop are all great promotions for the fonts.

A good example of Brand Design's ground-up restoration technique is the street savvy, radically modified promotions for Custom Papers Group's Riegel Jersey and Riegel PCW paper lines. Already a top performer on press and on the track, the Riegel lines lacked high performance promotional muscle. Under the direction of spraymaster and team manager Andy Cruz, the CPG promos were fine-tuned into show-stop'n dominators and highway haulers, often turning direct mail response rates of over 20% and quarter mile et's under eight seconds. Putting Brand/House behind the wheel of the Riegel

8.

**CRACKHOUSE** *Housemaid*

5.

*The Crew*  
Jeremy Dean, Allen Mercer, Andy Cruz & Rich Roat.

6.

*House Street Van Font Kit*  
Brochure (inside panel) for House Industries.

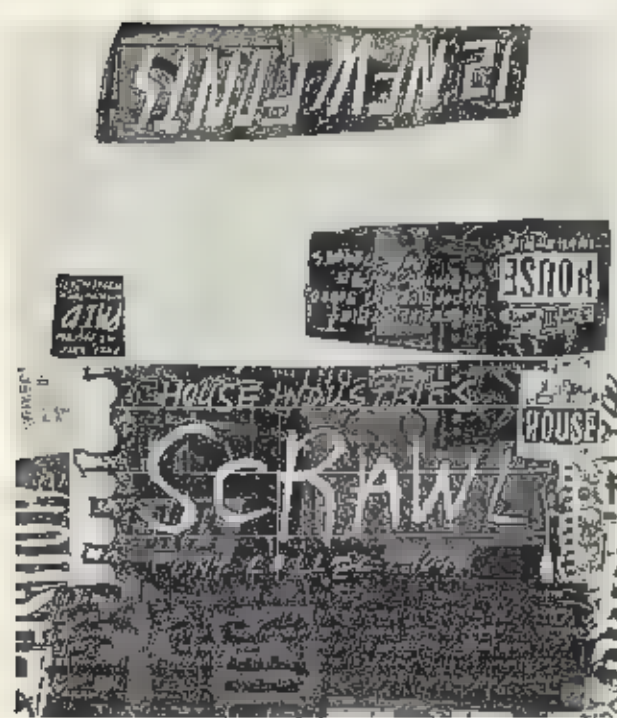
7.

*House Industries*  
Logo.

8.

*Crackhouse & Housemaid*  
Digital typefaces for House Industries.





9.

10.



11.

promos was just like Don Gartlets behind the wheel of a Hemi-powered rail — together they were unstoppable!

All of this custom work didn't come without assembling a great customizing team. When I first met Andy Cruz back in '90, he was still at the local vo-tech high school pursuing a dual degree in auto mechanics and graphic arts. He has since become known in hot rodding circles as the "Spraymaster" for his innate talent for picking the right colors, the using of the right techniques, and directing the rest of the shop staff in a way that makes their great work even better. He's the type of guy who was running four Webbers when everybody else was using Holley double pumpers — the Webbers took twice the tuning time, but the performance was always better in the end. His original partner, Rich Roat, still works closely with Andy in creating Brand's Custom themes. A 1987 graduate of the University of Delaware diversified arts program, Rich handles and logs each car as it comes to the shop, and does most of the copywriting.

Chief Technician Al Merce attended the same vo-tech school as Andy, but chose to continue his training at the esteemed Temple University Tyler Automotive and Engineering Academy. Al actually shapes and sands most of the custom illustration work, as well as balances and blueprints all of the hand-formed type treatments. While at Tyler, Al ran into freelance wrenches Ken Barber and Jeremy Dean, who showed their mettle working on the House Industries Weekend Warrior drag team and eventually earned full-time jobs on the customizing crew. Ken handles much of the detailed hammer and dolly work, while Jeremy Dean applies all base coats, cleans the grease traps and works with customers who need the "dirty" look.

9.  
*Scrawl Font Collection.*  
Brochure cover  
for House Industries.

10.  
*Super Riegel Custom*  
*Shop Manual.*  
Booklet cover  
for Custom Papers  
Group

11.  
*Bad Neighborhood in a Box*  
Cardboard box (top)  
for House Industries  
digital typeface  
collection.

12.  
*Condemndhouse*  
Digital typeface for  
House Industries

# Condemndhouse

12.





12.

## HOUSEBROKEN

13.

With its expanding staff and product line, Brand Design/House Industries recently moved into a new 5000 sq. ft. building with five heated and air conditioned bays, hydraulic lifts for detailing undercarriages and a central air compressor system. However, I more often than not find the members of the Brand/House customizing crew spurning the modern tools and favoring the paintbrush, pen, and the trusty ol' badger professional airbrush. (Jeremy still insists on cooking his cheese steaks with some scrap sheet metal and the cutting torch.) Allen explains that he's been looking, but there still isn't an Illustrator filter that will create a radical set of flames or a Photoshop filter that can emulate a true stipple pattern.

Even with all the success of the House Industries customizing components, the crew still wishes more designers would get back to the basics and give their layouts more hand-done custom treatments. Rich comments that no matter how many aftermarket parts you bolt up to your street machine, nothing turns heads like flames flyin' from custom-welded side pipes, a hand-rubbed metalflake finish or an air-brushed mural. You just can't buy those things over the counter. It's a lot like when I built up my Super Riegel Camaro — the Cragars were great, but the true custom touch came from the radical paint scheme created by the Brand/House customizing team.

In the face of burgeoning competition, the glamorous greasers at Brand/House continue to survive by inventing new ideas and tastefully reviving old ones. Instead of trying to follow the other hot rodders out there, they keep their blinders on and cook up new customization techniques. A great example of their forethought is the new House Street Van font set, a collection of seven high performance typefaces created in the mold of the great vanning craze of the 70's. House's reputation as innovators has attracted major industry names, including Ed "Big Daddy" Roth, who is licensing his name to House Industries for their new set of Rat Fink fonts. From where I'm sittin', you'd have to be runnin' top fuel in your blown rat motor to beat the customizers at Brand Design/House Industries.

12.  
*Sunrocker*  
Page from Riegel  
Accessories Catalog  
for Custom Papers  
Group.

13.  
*Housebroken*  
Digital typeface for  
House Industries.



# La Scrittura la Memoria Meliore.

## THE ABOVE FONT,

WHICH SERVES AS A MARKER OVER THE BODY OF THIS TEXT, IS THE FIRST IN THE MSS FOLIO SERIES. IT WAS DERIVED FROM A SPECIMEN OF DOCUMENTARY CURSIVE FROM 1601 FLORENCE IN WHICH WERE RECORDED 70 YEARS OF DEATHS. IT WAS WRITTEN BY ~~X~~, AN UNKNOWN CLERK IN THE NEWLY-BUILT UFFIZI HOUSE OF THE FLORENTINE GOVERNMENT. TODAY, IT IS HOUSED IN A BOOK OF MISCELLANEOUS FOLIOS AT THE NEWBERRY LIBRARY AND IN DOCUMENTS LABELED MSS FOLIO ON MY HARD DRIVE.

BUT WHY AND WHY NOW?

WHICH IS TO ASK, WHY DO THE ARABS WRITE FROM RIGHT TO LEFT, AZTECS IN A SPIRAL? WHY DOES HANDWRITING VARY NOT ONLY FROM INDIVIDUAL TO INDIVIDUAL, BUT BETWEEN CLASSES AND EVEN PROFESSIONS? IF NATIONALITY CAN BE WRITTEN IN CUISINE, WHAT'S REVEALED WHEN A POPULATION COLLECTIVELY SCULPTS ITS ALPHABET AS GEOMETRICALLY AS VERSAILLES OR LETS IT LOOP AS WILDLY AS AN ENGLISH GARDEN? THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN QUILLS AND REEDS?—OR THE OBVIOUS REVEALED BY ART: THAT PEOPLE WITH DIFFERENT TECHNIQUES, DIFFERENT HABITS OF MIND AND VALUES HAVE PUT DOTS AND STROKES TO CONFLICTING USES. WHICH IS TO SAY, THE HISTORY OF MSS FOLIO IS A HISTORY OF WRITING IS A HISTORY OF CULTURES IS A HISTORY OF VARIATIONS AND THEIR CAUSES. A HISTORY LIKE ALL HISTORIES: STORIES THAT SMEAR ACROSS RULED LINES.

WHICH IS TO WRITE,

*Once upon a time,  
in a beginning if not the beginning, in a hand far far away*  
though not at all very close



...the master should adopt the following device.  
With his left hand he should take  
hold of the right hand of the pupil who is standing by him and  
the lesson and make him repeat the lesson.

...the master's hand, comes to opposite more readily the  
pupil's hand, which he is trying  
to make him repeat the lesson.  
-16th century copybook



MEDIEVAL EUROPE TO BE INEXACT, MODERN EUROPE AND AMERICA TO BE INEXACT, THE WORLD WAS WRITTEN DIFFERENTLY, ITS AUTHOR RESIDING RIGHT WHERE YOU SIT. AND THE OMNIPOTENT WRITING HIMSELF and sometimes Herself INTO EXISTENCE:

**S**INCE FROM THE SUPREME COD MIND ARISES AND FROM MINDS SOUL AND SINCE THIS IN TURN CREATES ALL SUBSEQUENT THINGS IN CONTINUOUS SUCCESSION THE EXTENSIVE OBSERVATION WILL DISCOVER A CONNECTION OF ARTS FROM THE SUPREME COD DOWN TO THE LAST DREGS [Macrobius]

In our words, creation was one parchment, an expression of God's infinite mind where all is held and conversely revealed by one who can read His signatures: visible marks upon nature that disclose a web of associations so comprehensive that they could have only been written by Author as *Prime Mover*. Faces, with their eyes, nostrils, mouth and ears were visual similes for the sky and its seven planets, which were similes for the celestial spheres where the angelic and blessed pass their normal time reading a language without syllables, a text that is unequivocal and eternal because it is the face of the Word itself. [87 Augustin]

Original meant that which has existed since the Origin, the past manifest in the present just as the present contains the future. Accordingly, Greco Roman realism vanished as individual objects blended into the flat unities of Medieval art. Likewise, words were things, natural objects where Divinity could be read just as we might read a history of weather in the rings of a tree. What the shapes of words revealed was that God and Adam and the animals all once shared a single mirror of language that shattered at Babel into a multitude of distorting pieces. This same truth was later-discovered in the reality that all letters, no matter what the language, can be made with a square and a compass, that Divine Proportions reveal an omnipresent spirit underlying music, planetary motions, perfect solids, the Alphabet... To write, then, was to reveal God's Word and Medieval did so in a dignified hand *uncial*, somber as the Old Testament, its curves and bowled letters woven into a continuous texture of letters like the Great Chain of

EVERYWHERE AND IN ALL THINGS MAN SEES HIS OWN SIGNATURE: MANIFESTATIONS OF MIND UNCONSCIOUSLY PROJECTING ORDER OVER THE CHAOS THAT ASSAULTS THE SENSES. KNOWLEDGE, THEN, CONSISTS OF DISCOVERING THE STRUCTURES MIND HAS MADE: A LINEAGE OF APES, NOT ANGELS; WORDS ARE ARTIFICIAL, RELATED BY CONVENTION TO OTHER CONVENTIONS. LIKE "GOD," LIKE "HONOR," LIKE PIETIES WHOSE EXHAUSTION WAS REVEALED BY THE CHURCH AND STATE-SANCTIONED MASSACRES OF THE GREAT WAR. THE DISILLUSIONED ANGER THAT FOLLOWED WAS TURNED ON THE BOURGEOIS SOCIAL ORDER SO INTERTWINED WITH WAR AS GOOD BUSINESS— A SKEWMAN IS AN IT MAN

UNLIKE EARLIER PERIODS WHERE ARTISTIC CREATION MEANT THE OPEN IMITATION OF THE ANCIENTS, THE MODERN WAS THE EMBODIMENT OF ORIGINALITY and its ownership, A CONCEPTION AIDED BY THE DIN OF TRADITION BEING FORGOTTEN

ADVERTISING, POWER PRINTING PRESSES AND MECHANIZED FONT PRODUCTION.... DADA COLLAGES.... BAUHAUS SLASHED AWAY VICTORIAN IVY TO CREATE "XXth century" LETTERING WHILE CULTURE BECAME ARTISTS SPITTING ON PAINTERLY CLOUDS, WATER SPRITES, WAVES AND NOCTURNAL SCENTS; CULTURE BECAME ARCHITECTS, WRITERS, COMPOSERS SPITTING ON TWADDLE, BOMBAST; CULTURE BECAME PISSING ON ART AS PRETTINESS, PISSING ON DIVINE PROPORTIONS, PISSING ON HARMONY, BALANCE, RESTRAINT, DECORATION, FRIEZES; JACKSON POLLOCK PISSING IN A FIREPLACE. Divide and conquer. Sex and Death. OR MORE GENERALLY, MAN AS A BEING OF DESIRE AND FINITUDE WHO CAN, UNLIKE GOD, BE

WE ARE ALL T  
NOW DO WE DESIRE THE  
—Let this be our final



816610



EMPLOYING THIS NEW MANUSCRIPTS FOLIO  
TYPEFACE BY STEPHEN FARRELL TO DEMAND AN  
ACCOUNTING OF THE 8000 OR SO PEOPLE KILLED  
IN THE MASSACRE OF SREBRENICA.

Between Tuesday, July 11, and Friday, July 14, 1995,  
in a UN-designated "safe area", the Bosnian Serb  
military, led by General Ratko Mladic, blew past a small  
contingent of doomed UN peacekeepers and went down on  
Srebrenica, a town of 40,000 people.



Being itself with no separation between words, a timeless hand that indeed lasted for 1000 years *and lives on in an unbroken lineage down to the present*. Letters, words, sentences, pages, merged into sacred books of mysteries, serene as the Primum Mobile in their gilt capitals and painted illustrations, their ornaments and imposing page layouts displayed on high altars for the adoration of the faithful. To read, then, was an act of prayer. A re-enactment of Able, whose name means *He who refers all things to God*. In the Age of Manuscripts, personal letter writing was a scattered and varied practice.

And then:

THE AMAZING GROWTH OF OUR TECHNIQUES, THE ADAPTABILITY AND PRECISION THEY HAVE ATTAINED, ARE CREATING, MAKE IT A CERTAINTY THAT PROFOUND CHANGES ARE IMPENDING IN THE ANCIENT CRAFT OF THE *Beautiful*.

Paul Valéry, "The Conquest of Ubiquity"



at the expense of individualization

The Renaissance begins to rewrite Antiquity in open emulation/interpretation. Printing presses spew books. Italian silk = wealth =  $\$GNP$  = secular libraries = demystification of the book, its words now divided as an aid to comprehension, the mystery of its organization laid naked through headings. That is, The Author but also *authors*. Like Michelangelo, on his back beneath the Sistine Ceiling, creating *God Giving Life to Adam* and in so doing modeling the clays of his pigments into you and I: figures with individualized features rather than the stylized gestures of man as stained glass. Likewise knowledge. **Habits of thought so different as to constitute a different civilization.** Truth through senses. Space is divided according to distance, not theology. Galileo reading the sky declares Jupiter's moons to be not God's fine print but the Medici Planets after his patron, Cosimo Medici II, merchant wealthy enough to own a pope. Ledger and Balance move **PRIDE** from the column of 7-Deadly Sins to the head of Virtues. With the solo, melodrama becomes possible and *Bravissimo!—the birth of Opera!* In society battling over titles. Without heavenly host continually detuning the sky. Tragedy on stage becomes possible. In a world where one individual's reading has the force to split a Church. Everybody's got an opinion. But collectively a new attitude develops:

again?... Or: You can't see nothing yet.

IMAGINE A GOLDEN CHAIN OF SOME ~~X~~ THOUSAND MAINFRAMES HELD TOGETHER BY ELECTRICITY AND LIGHT WHERE INFORMATION = WEALTH =  $\$GNP$ .<sup>10</sup> NOW IMAGINE THE MILLIONS OF PCs CONNECTED TO THESE MAINFRAMES. NOW IMAGINE THESE PCs CONNECTED IN EVERY POSSIBLE COMBINATION. NOW IMAGINE THE LINES BETWEEN THEM AND THE ETCHED COPPER HAIRLINES WITHIN PULSING WITH THE ONES AND ZEROS OF OUR WRITING. Imagine it all now. **Hold it all in your mind at once.** IMAGINE THE IMPULSE THAT BRINGS A SYSTEM LIKE THIS INTO EXISTENCE: HABITS OF MIND THAT SEEK THE ALWAYS IN THE EVER-PRESENT, FROM THE GRANDEST OF UNIFICATION THEORIES TO THE LOWEST POLYSEMIOUS WORD. THE MORPHING OF *GRANDE HISTOIRE* INTO *petites histoires*, THE MORPHING OF ORIGINAL AS UNIQUE TO ORIGINS AS UBQUIITY, OF HIERARCHY TO *jouissance*, THE MORPHING OF 'LESS IS MORE' TO 'LESS IS A BORE,' OF WORDS IN PRINT TO IMAGE ON SCREEN, OF GENRES TO HYBRIDS, WRITING TO *archi-écriture*, ART AS MIRROR ON LIFE TO LIFE MIRRORING ART TO ART MIRRORING ART TO MIRRORS MIRRORING MIRRORS TERRIFYING... WITH THE RISE OF THE DOUBLE, OF THE INFINITE REGRESS, AUTHENTICITY WEAKENS. LIKEWISE AUTHORSHIP; COPYRIGHT BECOMES DIVORCED FROM FRAUD/PLAGIARISM, AND OWNERSHIP IS DECIDED BY LEGAL FORCE. EVERYBODY'S GOT AN OPINION. BUT COLLECTIVELY, A NEW ATTITUDE DEVELOPS:



TABLE 1  
 CORRELATIONS BETWEEN SUBJECTS' SELF-APPRAISALS AND  
 IDEAL AND BEST HANDWRITING (N = 11)

|        | Ideal<br>self | Private<br>social | Public<br>social |
|--------|---------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Normal |               |                   |                  |
| Best   |               |                   |                  |
| +.52   | -.16          | -.33              | -.79             |
| +.52   | -.23          | -.47              | -.86             |
| +.44   | -.28          | +.45              | +.42             |
| +.93   | -.06          | +.04              | +.01             |
| +.36   | +.17          | +.33              | +.65             |
| -.09   | -.17          | -.16              | +.07             |
| -.38   | -.26          | +.20              | -.20             |
| -.63*  | -.40          | +.12              | -.21             |
| +.83** | +.48          | +.66*             | +.50             |

THE IDEAS AND HABITS THEY

They separated the men from the women and children, an act that through time has meant trouble. They hanged men from trees and slit their throats on the streets outside their homes. They raped the women and children and kicked them out of town. They sent the remaining military-age men "to Bratunac, where Bosnian Serb officers said they would be questioned for possible war crimes", according to the New York Times account.

This typeface is based on the 1600 handwriting of a clerk in Florence, Italy. This clerk was performing a simple act that is one hallmark of a civilized society: Every time someone died, they added the name of that person, and the day that person died, and the neighborhood that person lived in, to a list.

That list was kept in a central place, so that everyone could know what happened to that person, and so that person's son could now inherit that person's land, or that person's spouse might think about marrying someone else, or that person's brother may come and try to comfort them.



# Book of the Courtier

When can the pursued girl ever go to her window that she does not see her stubborn, would-be lover speaking no word, but with eyes that speak, with pained and languid face, with hot sighs, often with copious tears? At night she cannot awaken without hearing music, or at least that restless soul moving about the walls of the house with sighs and plaints. Her maid produces a letter, a sonnet, or some such thing that tells how the poor man is consumed with love, how he values his own life at naught to serve her, how he wishes nothing from her that is not honorable.

[ Baldesar Castiglione ]

Limitless desire bounded by etiquette; walled cities but also walled houses within these cities and private armies to wage vendettas across generations. A tension between order and individualism that shows up even in the handwriting of clerks: the slant we call *italic*—mannerism as rakish as the jaunty angle of an artist's cap within a style regularized for record keeping.

In an age where the upwardly mobile continually clashed with old money, handwriting rose from the province of ecclesiastics and bureaucrats to also function as a sign of breeding. When THEY can read and write as well as we can, literacy as an index of status falls behind refinement of expression. Or as George Bickman put it in his 52 Vol. *THE REAL PENMAN: Five in Writing, what we admire in fine Gentlemen; an Easiness of Gesture, and the disengag'd Air, which is imperceptibly caught from frequently conversing with the Polite and Well-bred*.

**SPREZZATURA** was what THE BOOK OF THE COURTIER called this disengag'd Air (seemingly) effortless elegance. Linen collars, for example, contributed to an impression of life above dirt and labor. So did lyrically mannered language, mannered movement, and mannered behavior such as the invention of tipping one's hat. Dress, speech, dance, deportment, handwriting and other details coalesced into a stylized manner of living, *gentility*, that included the eclipse of the vendetta by the more civilized duel though one gentleman always fought sword duels with a fire nearby so if he only crippled his opponent he could throw him alive into the flames. A true gentleman couldn't engage in common revenge for an attack on his honor. Instead, he exchanged cards with his offender, then dispatched an intermediary who would deliver a courteous challenge written in an elegant hand, receive a courteous reply, as

To: *[illegible]*

Subject: *Umberto Eco writes*

I think of the postmodern attitude as the cultivated woman

and knows he cannot say to her 'I love you madly' because he knows that she knows (and that she knows that he knows) that these words have already been written by Barbara Cartland. Still, there is a solution. He can say 'As Barbara Cartland would put it: I love you madly.'

THE WORD *plagiarism* CAME INTO THE LANGUAGE TO DESCRIBE ONE WHO KIDNAPPED A CHILD OR SLAVE AND AROUND THIS CORE DISTINCTION OUR ACTIONS SPIN A NEW RHETORIC: *influence, pastiche, collage, intertextuality, imitation, quotation, source reference....* THAT IS, WITH THE EXHAUSTION OF THE AVANT-GARDE, RETURNS OF ALL KINDS ARE INEVITABLE. PHILIP GLASS WRITES AN OPERA IN SANSKRIT, BUT OTHERS SPEW OUT BASTARDIZED FONTS TO SELL KITSCH: *the avant-garde for sale*. SPEECH IN A DEAD LANGUAGE, [Fredric Jameson] AS DEPTHLESS AS THE APPROPRIATED CRUCIFIX EARRING. MORE FUNDAMENTALLY, THE SAME TURN OF MIND THAT CAST GOD AS A LINGUISTIC BEING BEGINS TO MORPH THE UNIQUE INTO A LOCUS FOR ITS REPRESENTATIONAL DOUBLES; THE PSYCHOLOGICAL *I*, THE SOCIAL *I*.... AS THE *I* GOES, SO GOES ITS ICON: the *signature* as manifestation of an unduplicatable individual in a particular time and place. STANDING BEFORE JOHN HANCOCK'S JOHN HANCOCK, ITS MATERIALS STILL MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR US TO FEEL HIS PRESENCE THE WAY PILGRIMS ONCE FELT BEFORE A SAINT'S RELICS. WE FEEL THE WAY AMERICANS *didn't* FEEL, RECEIVING THE FIRST machine writing, AS THEY CALLED TYPEWRITTEN LETTERS. SO STRONG WAS THE RESISTANCE TO THIS SIMULACRUM OF 'real writing,' THAT MAIL-ORDER COMPANIES ABANDONED ITS SPEED—A NECESSITY THAT FADED AS TYPEWRITING PROLIFERATED, LEAVING ONLY THE SIGNATURE AT THE FOOT OF A PAGE TO STAND THE GROUND OF AUTHORITY, ORIGINALITY—A LAST STAND THAT WEAKENS IN A CULTURE WHOSE SIGNATURES ARE ROUTINELY DUPLICATED: THE BIG, OBVIOUS SUBSTITUTIONS LIKE THE REPLACEMENT OF THE HERO BY THE CELEBRITY, BUT ALSO THE MYRIAD EVERYDAY SHIFTS: THE POLITICIAN TO ACTOR, CHEESE TO CHEEZE FOOD, THE SHIFT TO SIGNED JUNK MAIL, THE SOUND BYTE AS NEWS COVERAGE, THE DOCU-DRAMA, THE VOICE OF THE CASH REGISTER INSTEAD OF THE CASHIER....



... of a man who loves a very

say  
Cartier  
I love

At this point, having  
avoided false  
innocence, having  
said clearly that it is  
no longer possible to  
speak innocently, he  
will nevertheless have  
said what he wanted to  
say to the woman: that  
he loves her in an age  
of lost innocence. If  
the woman goes along  
with this, ... both will  
have accepted the  
challenge of the past,  
of the already said,  
which cannot be  
eliminated...

[Umberto Eco]

Serd A.1

*Lists are big this way. They determine who gets paid on Friday, who owes who how much money, who belongs in jail, who is qualified to do taxes and perform brain surgery in your state, who gets their water from what municipality, who can drive what kind of vehicle, and who can build what where. Being on the right list at the right time makes all the difference in the world.*

*Now these lists consist of language. Written language is made up of words and characters and symbols. These are in turn made up of lines and curves and dots and ink and light. The type designer gives this stuff form, taking bits and parts of expression and culture to make a new way to write. The typographer necessarily reflects and alters the society in which the work is created.*

*The stuff of this typeface in particular are 16 pages of the singular scratches and penstrokes of one person who lived in Florence, Italy in 1601. Stephen Farrell was not thinking of the 0000 in Srebernica while he cobbled together these trademark <sup>TM</sup> signs and copyright © symbols and dollar signs \$.*



well as a gift, then arrange a time and a place for the two parties to courteously exchange pistol shots. In the duel, then, can be seen one of many nexus of the period with its individual, standing erect and alone within a highly structured time and place, delivered there by elegant handwriting, the unmoved mover, a life-time of breeding concentrated into what could be one's ultimate moment with the resulting deaths recorded in a secretary hand, *humanistic cursive*, derived from the hand of the Biblical scribe

By the time *X* was recording deaths in the register of the Uffizi house, the two currents embodied in the order-giving hand of a secretary and order-bending individuality of courtly handwriting had been brought together in the copybooks: books of handwriting models produced by competing writing masters. The italic samples within appeared startlingly fresh to their original audiences *as fresh as Galileo's discovery of unknown planets* exquisitely apt vehicles for the *New Knowledge*. Arrighi, Tagliente, Palatino and the others who designed these hands developed rockstar status. Fashionable classes hired them as tutors. Publishers promoted the sale of their copybooks which promoted the master and his school where distinct hands were taught for distinct purposes: a strong correspondence hand for a cavalier, a delicate hand for a Lady, a streamlined hand for business where flourishes would be as inappropriate as lace on a carpenter's apron. In all of these, as in any design, there was a convergence of the aesthetics and technology of a particular time and place: like cuneiform on wax or the phosphor trace of a screen, the materials used were articulated in the shapes of the letters.

In 16th century Italy, this meant that handwriting design began with a selection of quills. Right-handed writers preferred the curve of quills from left wings. All writers preferred the quills of a goose. Properly tempered, pens made from goose quills were elastic enough to allow for free line expression yet durable enough to last an entire day. With a sharp penknife they could be shaped precisely and writing masters often experimented with cutting quills, testing differing shapes for their effect on line quality.

To produce the italic slant seen in *X*'s hand, the pen was cut at an angle with the left corner forward, a square tip cut narrow to help produce the clubbing on the ascenders begun by Giovanni Francesco Cresci and

EACH FAX SIGNATURE THAT IS GIVEN LEGAL AUTHORITY REPRESENTS A MOVE TOWARD AN ACCEPTANCE OF THE IMAGE FOR THE AUTHENTIC, NOT NECESSARILY AS ITS REPLACEMENT, BUT AS AN EQUALIZATION OF ONE WITH THE OTHER. IN THE ABUNDANCE OF DOUBLES LIES ONE SOURCE FOR THE RISE OF CONNOISSEURSHIP FOR ORIGINALS AND, SIMULTANEOUSLY, THE DIMINISHING RESPECT, USEFULNESS, NEED OR EVEN DESIRE FOR ORIGINALS IN OUR EVERYDAY LIFE *paid for by modem*. BY THE TIME MRS FOLIO FIRST APPEARED ON SCREEN, A REVOLUTION HAD TAKEN PLACE IN OUR CONCEPTION OF THE BOOK: A REFLECTION OF A SOCIETY WHERE NEARLY EVERYONE HAS INSTANTANEOUS ACCESS TO WORLD-WIDE PUBLICATION AND CAN GLOSS EACH OTHER'S WORDS. WHERE EVERYONE CAN DOWNLOAD ANY IMAGE AND INCORPORATE IT INTO THEIR OWN PAGE LAYOUT WITH ITS GILT CAPITALS AND ADS AND ADOBE ORNAMENTS AND HTML TAGS PLACED ON THE WEB FOR ALL. COMPARE THIS TO ANTIQUE CONCEPTIONS OF THE MODERN BOOK WITH ITS AUTHOR, BINDING AND FINITUDE: AN OBJECT THAT CAN BE OWNED. WHAT ALPHABET COULD WE INVOKE TO GIVE FORM TO THIS NEW WAY OF READING? WHAT LETTERS WERE PRODUCED BY THE MEDIEVAL CONCEPTION OF READING AS MEDITATION? BY THE MODERN CONCEPTION OF READING AS INFORMATION RETRIEVAL? BY OUR RE-NAISSANCE OF READING AS RE-WRITING ARISTOTLE'S "All art is imitation"? WHILE OUR RETURN FOREGROUNDS A BELIEF THAT THE ORIGINALITY OF A WORK IS PROPORTIONAL TO THE IGNORANCE OF ITS READERS, IT ALSO CLAIMS THAT AS SURELY AS CREATION *EX NIHILO* IS IMPOSSIBLE; SO TOO IS THE PERFECT COPY, THE REPETITION WITHOUT CHANGE. SO WE BEGIN TO WRITE: A DIGITAL SIMULATION OF HANDWRITING UNAWARE OF ITS ORIGINS, OF THE TRACE OF VIGOR AND FATIGUE, OF ATTENTIVENESS AND LETHARGY: THE CORPOREALITY OF A LIVING HAND. THE LETTER DRAWN IN INK DECAYS WITH THE BODY OF THE TEXT WHILE THE DIGITAL HAND HOUSES FOREVER THE POTENTIAL FOR THE ETERNAL RETURN. EACH KEYSTROKE *re)*PRODUCES A FROZEN PLACARD POINTING TO ITS ORIGINAL ACT. IT COUPLES A MOMENT, *a right here, right now*-WITH THE ABILITY TO REPLAY THAT MOMENT IN PERFECT SIMILITUDE IN ALL PLACES. IN THIS WAY *the movement of one clerk in 1601 snaps* AND BY SO DOING CONTRIBUTES TO THE DISSIPATION OF THE UNIQUE OF THE ORIGIN AS WELL AS THE AT THE KEYBOARD. AN ACTION THAT FURTHER BLURS THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN THE PUBLIC AND THE PRIVATE, THAT BLURS THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN MAN AND MACHINE LIKE NO QUILL EVER COULD. IT IS AN INSTANCE OF THE PAST WRITING UPON THE PRESENT AS SURELY AS OUR PRESENT IS ARTICULATED UPON THE PAST.



while signature of the Director of Public Aid  
is sufficient under the Public Code.

the art of acceptance that permits the Ash Museum  
to hold these Egyptian tomb with 'real' and  
'ephemeral' books, none of which are 'dead' but  
because no one believes it important enough to ask

ILLUMINATING WEB PAGES. HTTP://WWW.TECHNET.NM.ORG/PAX.HTM

Democratizing of representations is complete? It's not until when something  
is actually straight forward as listing people, or, the census, because  
for no even ten years in a generation history?

If you ever gone into a research library to write an essay,  
like this one, and had the creeping suspicion that you were nothing  
but a fishing collection of fragments?

But the choice of such a human material from so deep in  
the manger of our civil laws and structure guarantees it.  
would speak straight to us. The making of lists reeks of  
order, discipline, and succession. This typeface was built  
the same way the International system of nation-states  
was — with the remnants of Europe's political and social  
institutions banged through the mouth of American English.

And the breakdown of decency in the middle of Europe is a  
direct threat to order. Anywhere that the International  
systems of nation-states is flouted by creeps, the whole  
system goes to pot.

The unwritten document which now applies to Bosnia and  
Herzegovina is the Dayton Peace Plan, and it addresses  
the question of the dead. It calls for the killers to be caught  
and tried but no one wants to disturb the signators whose  
generals gave the orders and whose soldiers did the killing.

I don't know what typeface the Dayton Peace Plan is  
set in, but whomever designed it must be very proud.

alive in packaged bits of a ritual to be shared



widely practiced by the time *X* began his training. Cresci, like most of the masters *X* could have learned from, would have worked out his alphabet with its intended use firmly in mind. For the documentation of the hand used in the Uffizi registers, the goal was a rapid, legible script: the characters were simplified so they could be drawn with few pen lifts and without the acute attention required of more calligraphic lettering. Basically, on the oval, the designer worked out the proportions of the part to the whole. He considered the lyric effects of curved strokes versus angular connectors, the impression of forward motion in italic versus the static posture of a vertical bar. In total, handwriting designers strove for *SPREZZATURA* the elegant spectacle made to appear effortless.

Elegance as effortless as a pen gliding across paper. Along with the shapes of letters, copybooks included the order and direction of each stroke a ritual we re-enact wherever we make the *b* by drawing its leftward stroke first and downward; a copybook would also include directions for shaping the pen, the posture for writing.... A clerk like *X* would follow the models, practicing his spacing and hand pressure, adjusting his speed so that the maxims of the master might live in his hand though the specific shape and weight of his letters would adjust to the needs of his specific writing task: which, once upon a time meant an embodiment of facts in the organic materials of *X*'s craft: the paper, the iron-gall ink, animal parts: an unconscious writing into existence of a culture where facts were natural objects, like stones on continents, waiting to be discovered. To write was to inscribe for posterity a permanent record of weights and measures

*Ricevuto oggi 20 braccia di sola r...*

of scientific discovery

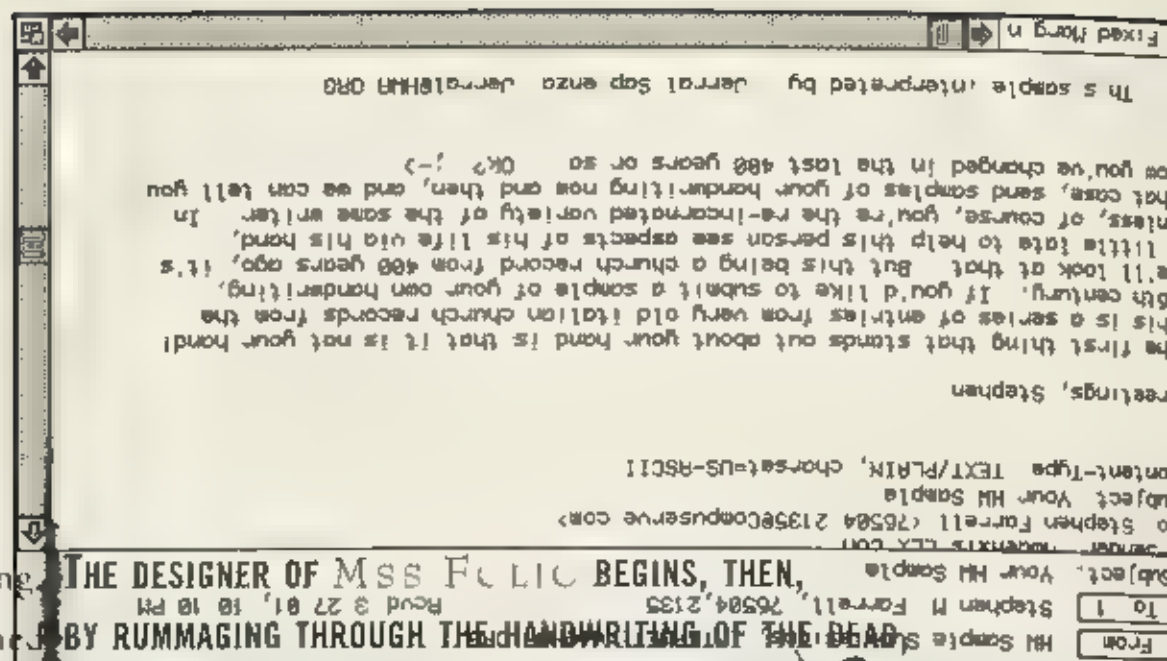
NEL 1492 CRISTOFORO COLOMBO NAVIGÒ L'ALCEANO AZZURRO

of sins and indulgences

*10,000 anni di indulgenze concesse in...*

of debts and credits

of births and deaths



THE DESIGNER OF MSS FOLIC BEGINS, THEN, BY RUMMAGING THROUGH THE HANDWRITING OF THE DEAD, SEARCHING FOR A FORM THAT RESONATES. ONCE *X*'S DOCUMENT WAS FOUND, TOOLS OF THE CRAFT ENABLED THIS DESIGNER TO SYSTEMATICALLY ATOMIZE THE HAND AND ISOLATE IT, ALLOWING THE RITUAL OF HANDWRITING TO PLAY OUT WITHIN A CONFINED LATITUDE OF STANDARDIZED STROKES. DISSOLVED ARE THE TRACES OF FATIGUE VISIBLE IN AN UNEVENNESS OF THE ORIGINAL DAY'S LABOR. SO GOES THE CORPOREALITY OF THE MATERIALS, A QUILL, FOR EXAMPLE, RUNNING OUT OF INK BEFORE LINE'S END. HYBRID CONFIGURATIONS OF SELECTED LETTERS ARE ASSEMBLED, THEN DISSECTED TO CREATE COLLAGES IN THE SHAPE OF *%* AND *@* AND MANY OTHER CHARACTERS *X* NEVER LEARNED TO FASHION. BY BRACKETING, RECONSTRUCTING AND EMULATING, THE DESIGNER PLUCKS FROM THE ORIGINAL TEMPO A RHYTHM AND CONTEMPORARY ORIENTATION REFINED INTO A FINAL EXPRESSION OF *SPREZZATURA*, an impression of effortless elegance. ELEGANCE, AS EFFORTLESS AS TYPING. THE DESIGNER WHO CREATES A NEW FONT USUALLY SIGNS A LICENSING AGREEMENT WITH A FOUNDRY, THEN AWAITS KUDOS AND FINANCIAL REWARDS. WHAT USUALLY HAPPENS THOUGH IS THAT HIS OR HER FONT WILL BE BOOTLEGGED AFTER *or even before* THE INITIAL PURCHASE, EARNING ITS CREATOR ABOUT 13 CENTS AS IT GROSSES CONTINENTS AND OCEANS. EFFORTLESS AS **DISK COPY**. TO THE CLICKING OF MICE, MSS FOLIC PROLIFERATES, THE FORM OF *X*'S HANDWRITING BECOMING THE FORM OF OTHER POTENTIAL *X*'S WRITING ADS, WRITING DOCUMENTS, WRITING POETRY, WRITING.... WRITING OUR CULTURE INTO EXISTENCE; EVEN USERS OF THE FONT WHO ARE SIMPLY AFTER "a look" ENACT THE FONT ITSELF, UNCONSCIOUSLY PERFORMING A REWRITING OF THE PAST INTO A MANNER MORE SUITED TO THE PRESENT, A RECONFIGURATION OF KNOWLEDGE, AESTHETICS, READING, OR WRITING A SENSE OF HISTORY.... WHICH IN OUR MOMENT IS TO WRITE, BUT HE NO LONGER DISCOVERS A NEW WORLD.



We now know that 8000 men were killed in those few days in  
Srebrenica, 200 years and five hundred miles from the list of  
the dead in Florence. But there is no list of the dead of  
Srebrenica, and the list of the missing is not good enough.

It is fitting and right that someone would take this  
typesface and use it to talk back at Europe with a  
reflective, terrified glance. For those of us who write in  
English today, the craggy lips of the Romantic languages  
look back at us each time we see our own words.

With this typesface and a computer anyone can compose a  
document in the deliberate image of those who have gone  
before in dignified civility. That is what I do now, in my  
hand, in this typesface — demand a list of the dead from  
those who killed them.

Dal Xan Q



The following typographic collages were originally created for an installation at Eastern Michigan University's Ford Gallery. The images were produced using a process that attempts to abstract the idea of parameters used in the professional practice of graphic design. The result is a *theoretically* based product; twenty-six inconsistent letter forms that make up an alphabet. I choose this particular approach since I have already created a number of alphabets that hold together as a consistent system, and I am aware of the obvious necessities of working through such complexities

As both a designer and educator, I find the content is critical to the formation of a design and its reception by an audience. Meaning, of course, is inherently unfixed. Content is always shifting based on context. The nature of such relationships is a constant source of inspiration.

This project combines the three aspects of the design process that continually redefine themselves for me:

| ALPHABETS<br>(form) | METHODS<br>(process) | WORDS<br>(meaning) |
|---------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
|---------------------|----------------------|--------------------|

- 1 A
- 2 H
- 3 C
- 4 D
- 5 E
- 6 F
- 7 G
- 8 H
- 9 I
- 10 J
- 11 K
- 12 L
- 13 M
- 14 N
- 15 O
- 16 P
- 17 Q
- 18 R
- 19 S
- 20 T
- 21 U
- 22 V
- 23 W
- 24 X
- 25 Y
- 26 Z

The process works as follows: the form of each letter is based on the definition of words found in an ordinary dictionary. The words come from the sections representing each letter of the alphabet, and the method for finding the word comes from a *corresponding numbering system* assigned to the letters in the alphabet.

FOR EXAMPLE,

the letter H is the EIGHTH letter out of TWENTY-SIX letters in the English alphabet. Starting at the first page of the "H" SECTION in my DICTIONARY, I turned EIGHT pages in; on that page, I counted TWENTY-SIX words down, and the *twenty-sixth* word on that page became my *starting point*.

Therefore, the words selected were a result of *chance, not choice*.

-----

BEGINNING WITH THE LETTER "A" AND WORKING IN SEQUENCE TO "Z," the resulting series and corresponding method allowed for chance and control simultaneously. The process also afforded me the opportunity to interpret the content and form using my own cultural frames of reference, such as my understanding of typographic history, perceptions about gender, and my love of a wide range of vernacular source material.

IN THE END, this series became for me a new way to visualize the 26 characters of the alphabet. It also became a way to articulate thoughts in pictures, thus extending my LEXICON OF FORM AND CONTENT



first letter

abandon

1. the first letter of the English alphabet: from the Greek *alpha*, a borrowing from the Phoenician
2. any of the speech sounds that this letter represents 3. a type or impression for A or a
4. the first in a sequence or group 5. an object shaped like A

a | ban•don - vt.

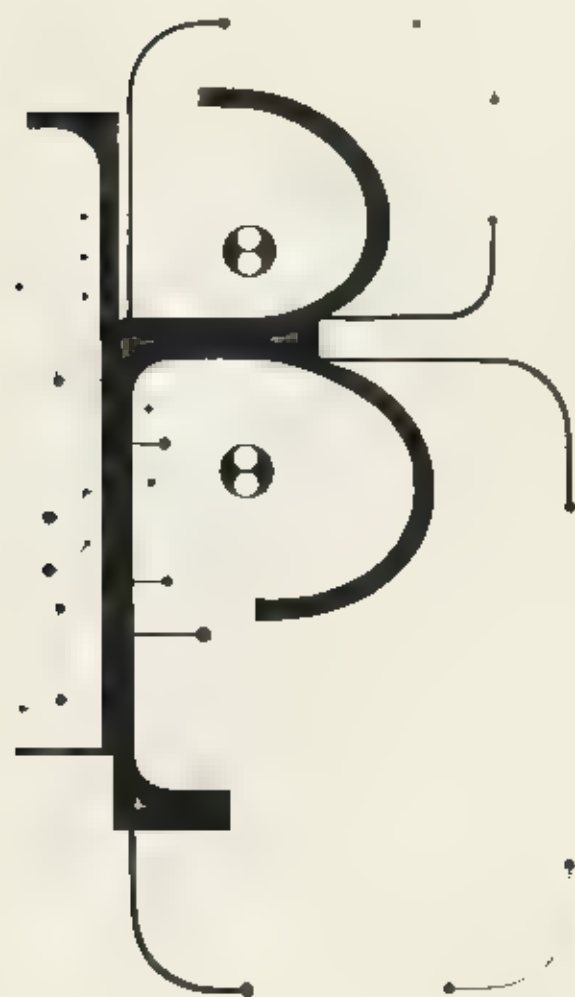
1. to give up (something) completely or forever (to abandon all hope)
2. to leave, as in danger or out of necessity forsake desert 3. to yield oneself completely, as to a feeling, desire etc



4. unrestrained **freedom of action**  
or **emotion**, surrender to one's impulses

1. the *second* letter of the English alphabet from the Greek *beta* a borrowing from the Phoenician
2. any of the speech sounds that this letter represents 3 a type or impression for B or b 4. the **second** in a sequence or group 5. an object **shaped like B**

**bacciferous** - **adj.**  
1. producing berries



second letter

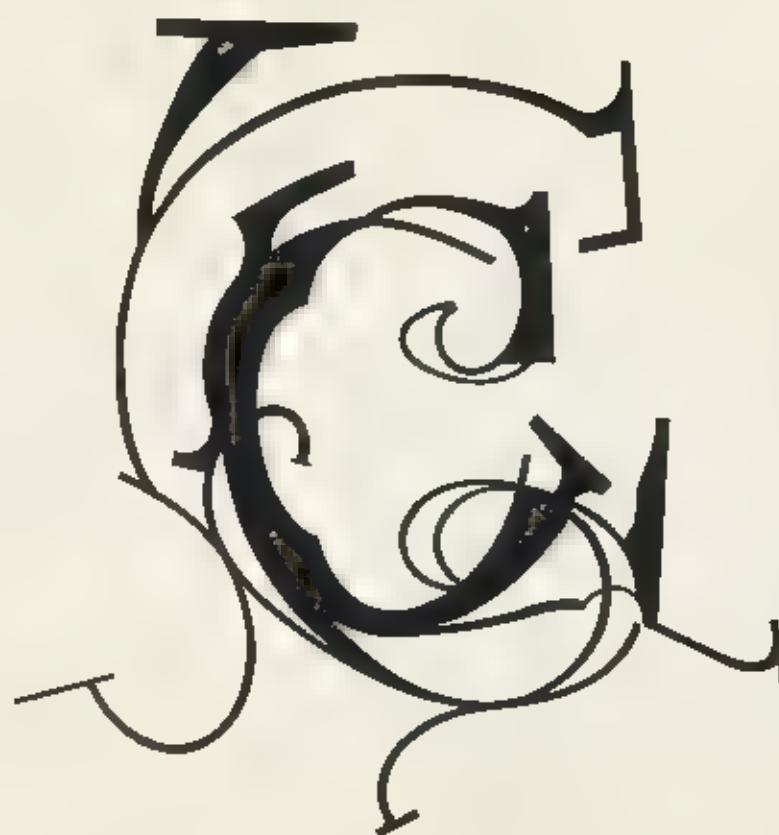
**bacciferous**

1. the *third* letter of the English alphabet from the Greek *gamma*, a borrowing from the Phoenician
2. any of the speech sounds that this letter represents 3. a type or impression for C or c 4. the **third** in a sequence or group 5 an object **shaped like C**

**Cadillac** - **n.**

1. something that is the **most luxurious** or highest quality of its kind

2. Sieur Antoine de la Mothe,  
c 1658 1730 Fr explorer in America



third letter

**Cadillac**

1. the *fourth* letter of the English alphabet from the Greek *delta*, a borrowing from the Phoenician
2. any of the speech sounds that this letter represents 3. a type or impression for D or d 4. the **fourth** in a sequence or group 5. an object **shaped like D**

**damselfish** - **n.**

1. see FISH any of a **percoid family** (Pomacentridae) of **small, rough scaled**, brightly colored tropical reef fishes



fourth letter

**damselfish**





1. the *fifth* letter of the English alphabet: from the Greek *epsilon* a borrowing from the Phoenician 2. any of the speech sounds that this letter represents 3. a type or impression for E or e 4. the *fifth* in a sequence or group
5. an object **shaped like E**

**ec•lec•ti•cism - n.**

1. an eclectic method or system of thought
2. the using or **upholding** of such a **method** or system



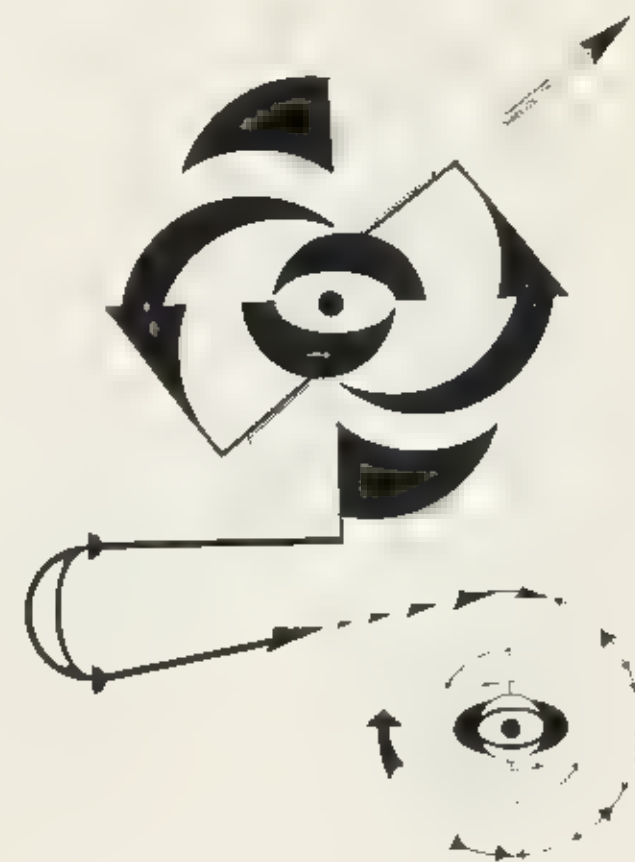
1. the *sixth* letter of the English alphabet; a modification of the Old Greek digamma (F), ultimately from the Phoenician 2. any of the speech sounds that this letter represents 3. a type or impression for F or f 4. the *sixth* in a sequence or group
5. an object **shaped like F**

**fal•si•ty - n.**

1. the **condition** or quality of being false; specif,
  - a.) incorrectness
  - b.) dishonesty
  - c.) deceitfulness
  - d.) disloyalty

- 2 pl -ties something false, esp

a lie

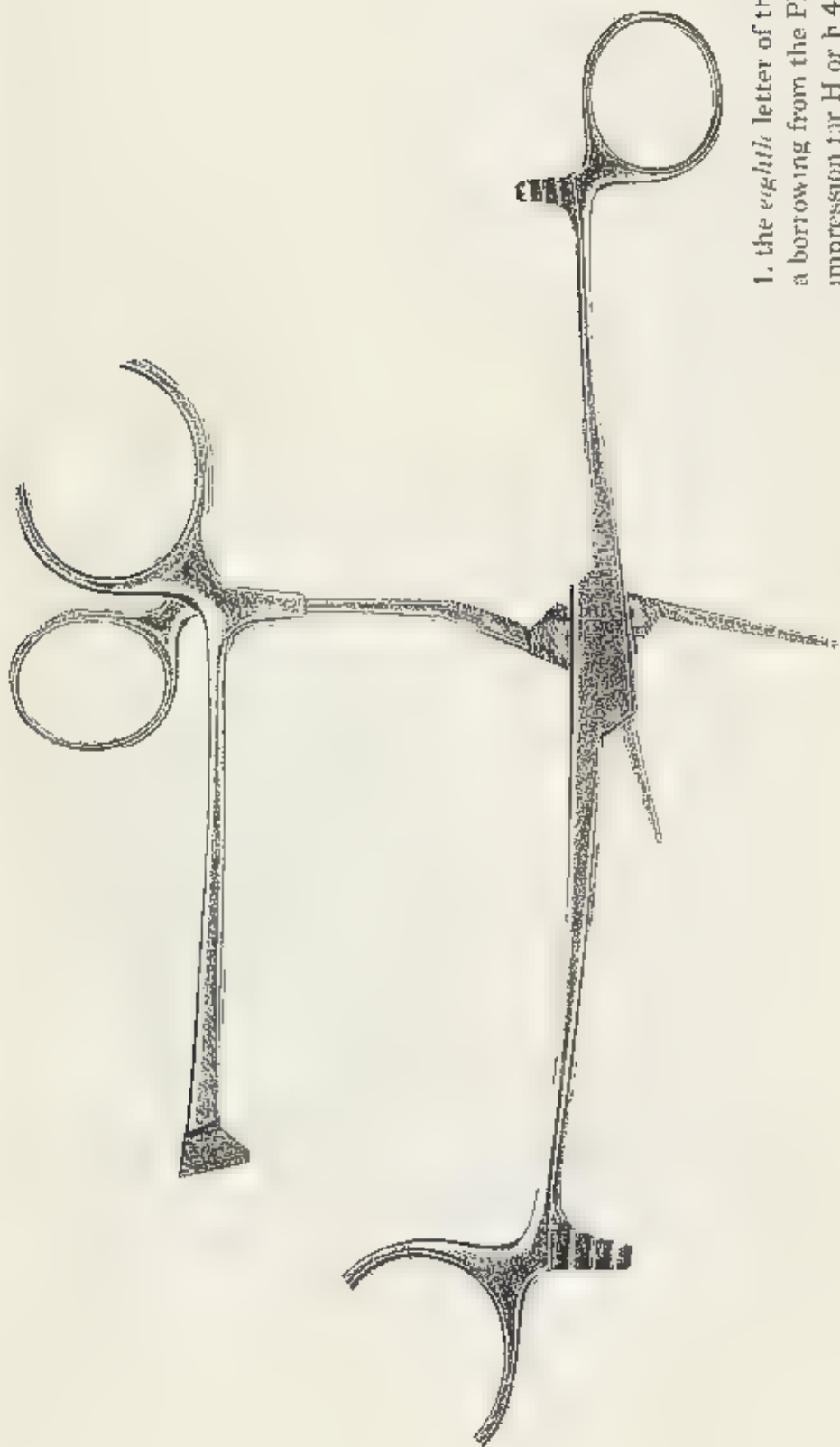


- 1 the *seventh* letter of the English alphabet from the Greek *gamma* a borrowing from the Phoenician 2. any of the speech sounds that this letter represents 3. a type or impression for G or g 4. the *seventh* in a sequence or group
- 5 an object **shaped like G**



gan | ja or gan • jah - n.

1. (Hindu) MARI, ANA



*eighth letter*

**handily**

611

1. the *eighth* letter of the English alphabet from the Greek *eta*, a borrowing from the Phoenician
2. any of the speech sounds that this letter represents
3. a type or impression for H or h
4. the *eighth* in a sequence or group
5. an object **shaped like H**

**handily** - adv.

1. in a **handy** manner, **deftly** or conveniently
2. with no trouble easily

{ to win handily }



*ninth letter*

**immane**

674

1. the *ninth* letter of the English alphabet via Latin from the Greek *eta*, a modification from the Phoenician; this letter first dotted in the 11th cent. was not distinguished form j until the 17th cent.
2. any of the speech sounds that this letter represents
3. a type or impression for I or i
4. the *ninth* in a sequence or group
5. an object **shaped like I**

**immane** - adj.

1. huge,

immense

2. cruel or brutal,



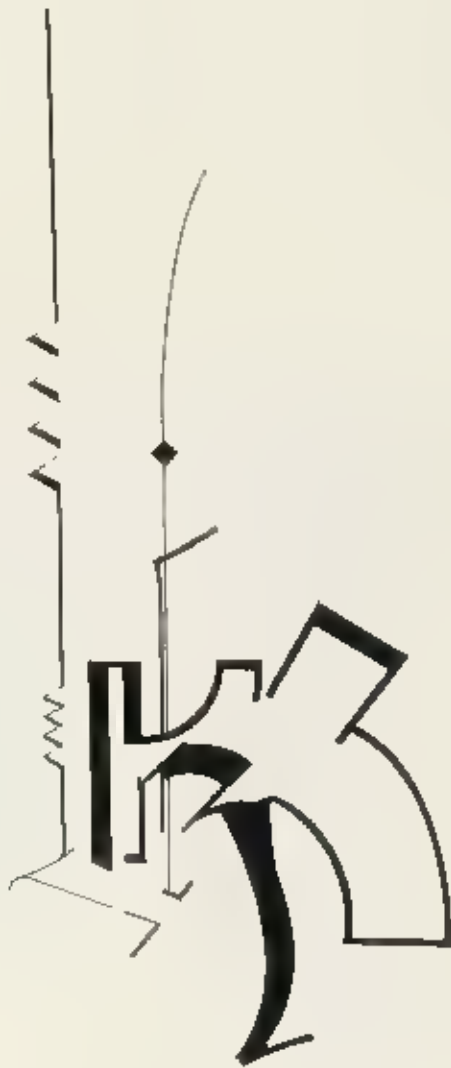


jollity - n.

1. the quality or state of being jolly
2. fun, gaiety
3. a type or impression for j or j
4. the tenth in a sequence or group
5. an object shaped like j

party

1. the eleventh letter of the English alphabet; from the Greek kappa, a borrowing from the Phoenician; 2. any of the speech sounds that this letter represents
3. a type or impression for K or k
4. the eleventh in a sequence or group
5. an object shaped like K

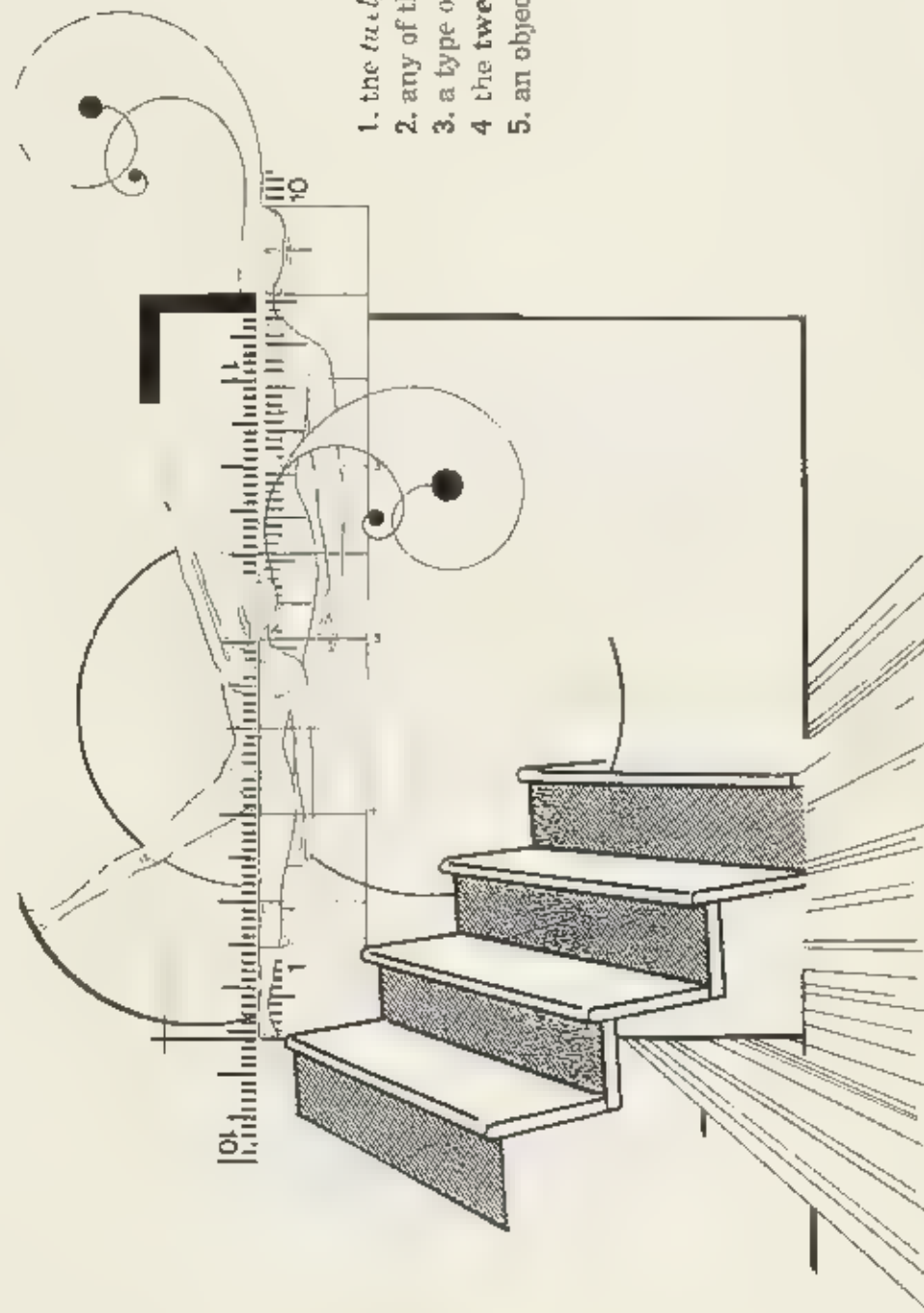


kirschwasser - n.

1. German,

cherry water

a colorless alcoholic drink distilled from the fermented juice of black cherries  
Often kirsch



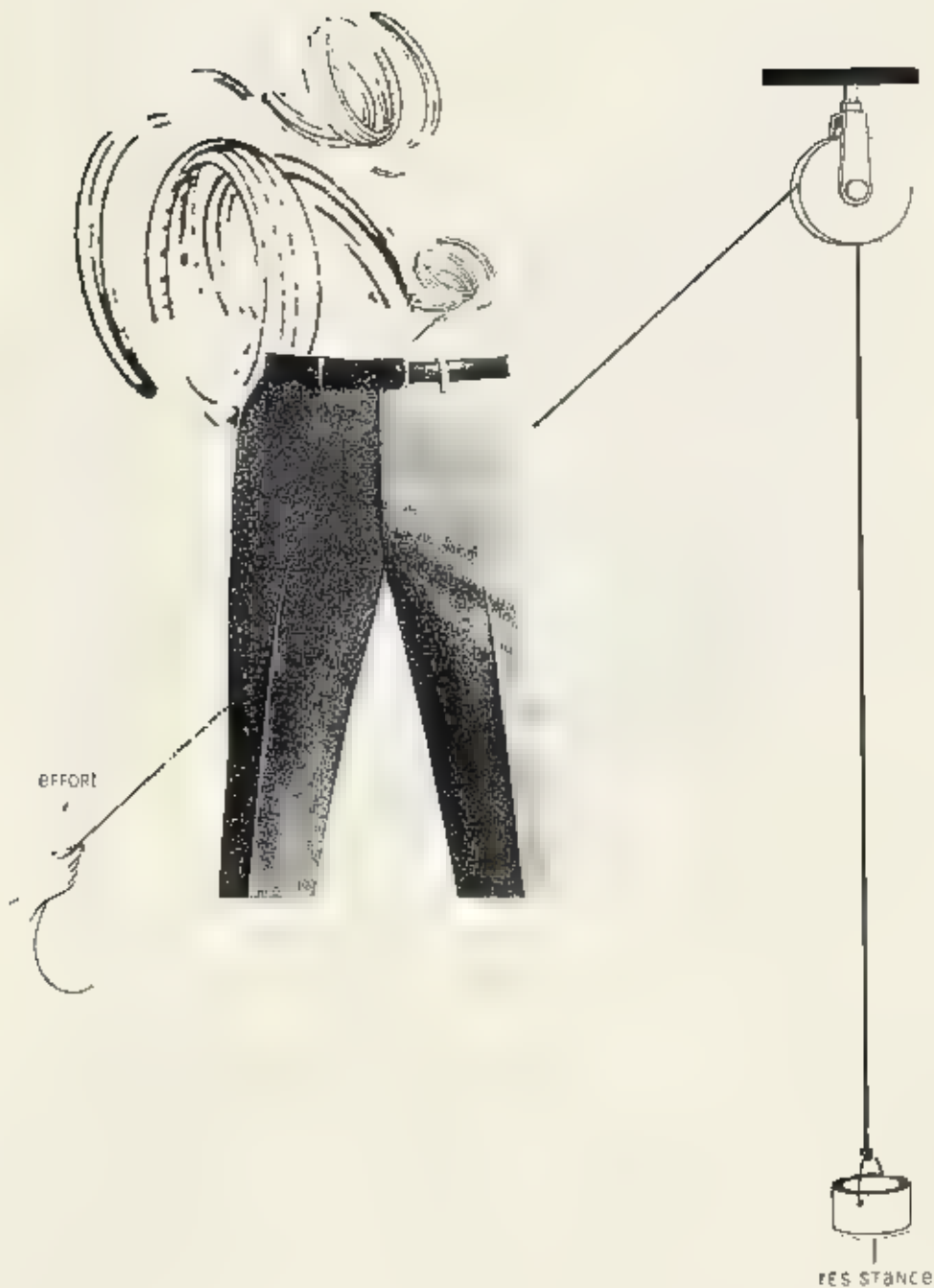
1. the twelfth letter of the English alphabet; from the Greek lambda, a borrowing from the Phoenician
2. any of the speech sounds that this letter represents
3. a type or impression for L or l
4. the twelfth in a sequence or group
5. an object shaped like L

Latin - adj.

1. of ancient Latium or its people
2. of ancient Rome or its people
3. of or in the language of ancient Latium and ancient Rome

4. designating or of the languages derived from Latin, the peoples who speak them, their countries, cultures, etc

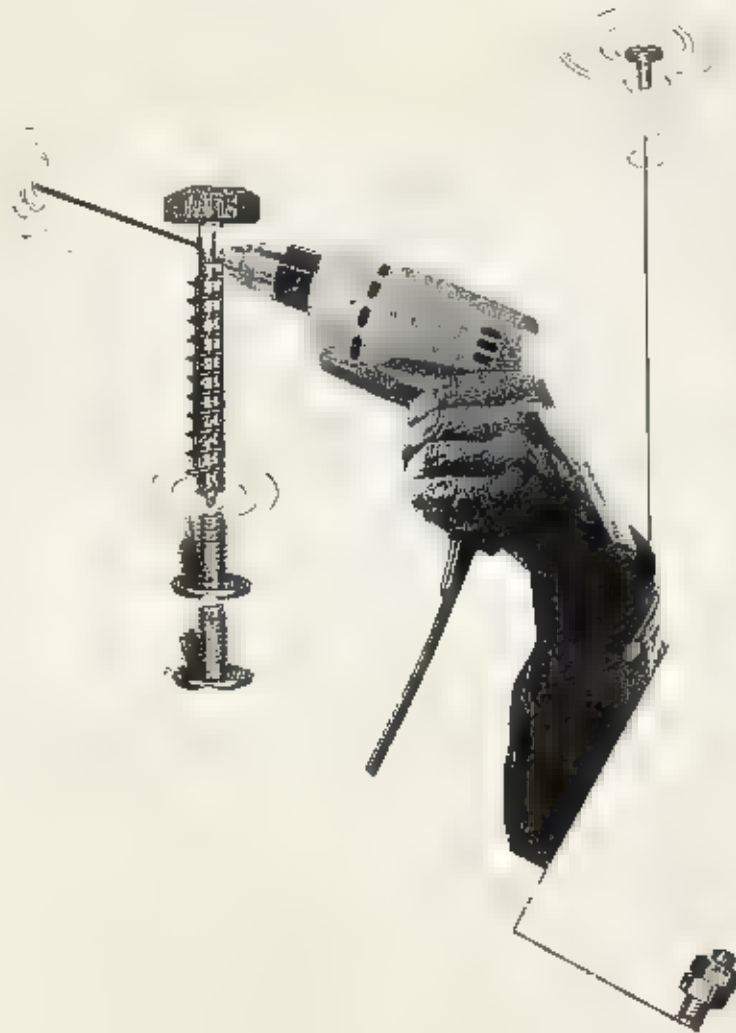




thirteenth letter

**manageable**

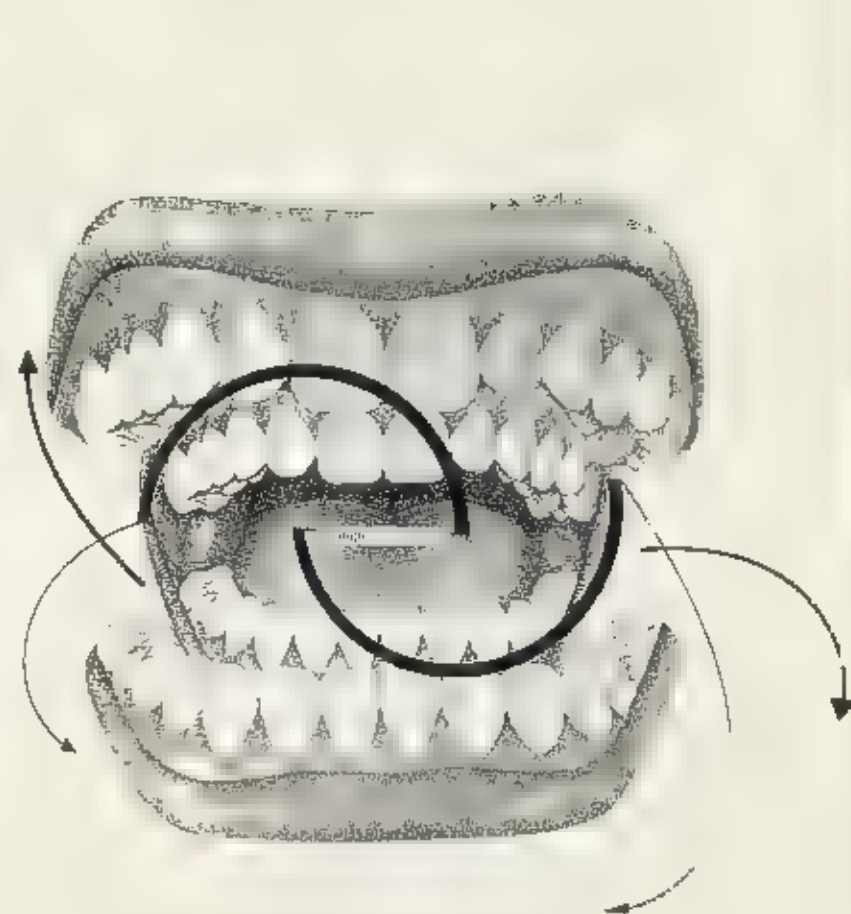
820



fourteenth letter

**Neville**

912



fifteenth letter

**onrush**

947

5. of the **Roman Catholic Church**, esp. as distinguished from the Eastern Church - n.  
1. a native person of ancient Rome 2. a Roman language

1. the *thirteenth* letter of the English alphabet: from the Greek *mu*, a derived ultimately from the Phoenician  
2. any of the speech sounds that this letter represents 3. a type or impression for M or m  
4. the *thirteenth* in a sequence or group  
5. an object **shaped like M**

**man•a•ga•a•ble - adj.**  
1. that which can be managed, controllable, tractable, contrivable, etc

1. the *fourteenth* letter of the English alphabet: from the Greek *nu*, a borrowing from the Phoenician  
2. any of the speech sounds that this letter represents 3. a type or impression for N or n 4. the *fourteenth* in a sequence or group  
5. an object **shaped like N** 6. Printing an en (half an em)

**Nev•il•le or Nev•ille**  
1. after Neuville town in Normandy  
lit. new city / a

**masculine**  
surname, also **Nev'ile** or **Nev'ill**

1. the *fifteenth* letter of the English alphabet: from the Greek *omega* and *omicron*, both borrowed from the Phoenician 2. any of the speech sounds that this letter represents 3. a type or impression for O or o 4. the *fifteenth* in a sequence or group 5. an object **shaped like O**  
6. shaped like a *o*; **circular** or **oval** in shape

**on•rush - n.**  
1. a headlong dash forward

**strong**  
onward **rush-** on'rush'ing adj.





sixteenth letter

parlor maid

1. the *sixteenth* letter of the English alphabet from the Greek *pi* borrowing from the Phoenician
2. any of the speech sounds that this letter represents
3. a type or impression for P or p
4. the *sixteenth* in a sequence or group
5. an object **shaped like P**

**par | lor • maid - n.**

1. a

**maid**

who serves at table, answers the door,

etc.



seventeenth letter

qy (query)

1. the *seventeenth* letter of the English alphabet via Latin from the early Greek *koppa* borrowing from the Phoenician
2. any of the speech sounds that this letter represents, as, in English words (except those borrowed from Arabic) where it is always followed by *u*
3. a type or impression for Q or q
4. the *seventeenth* in a sequence or group
5. an object **shaped like Q**

**qy**

1. query

**query - n**

1. a question, **inquiry**

2. a doubt

3. a question mark

(?)

placed after a question or used to question the accuracy of written or printed matter

4. to call **in**

**question;**

to

ask

about



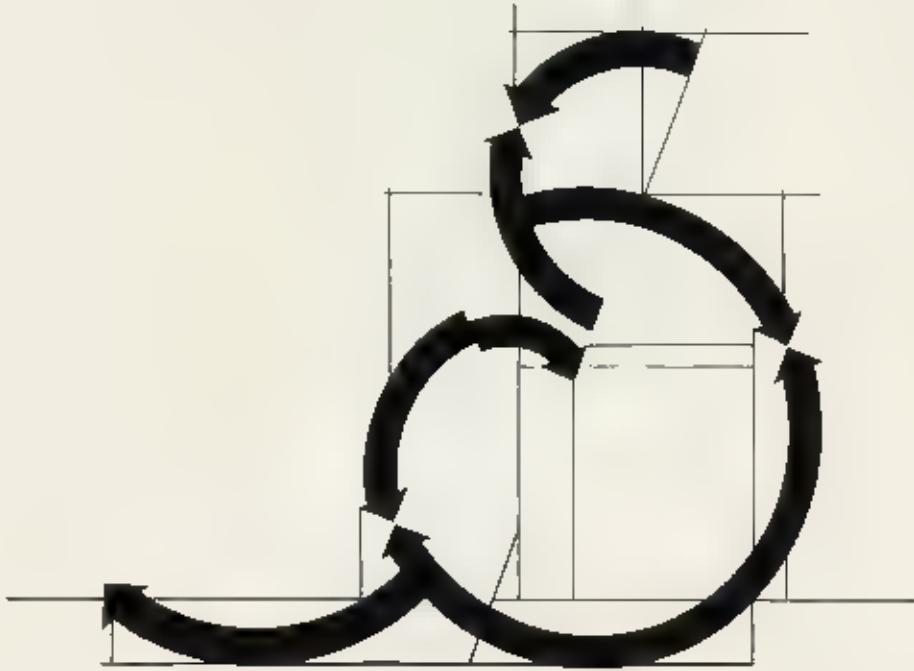


1. the *eighteenth* letter of the English alphabet from the Greek *rho*, a borrowing from the Phoenician 2. any of the speech sounds that th.s letter represents, 3. a type or impression for R or r 4. the **eighteenth** in a sequence or group 5. an object **shaped like R**

**re•cord player - n.**

1. any of various devices on which phonograph records may

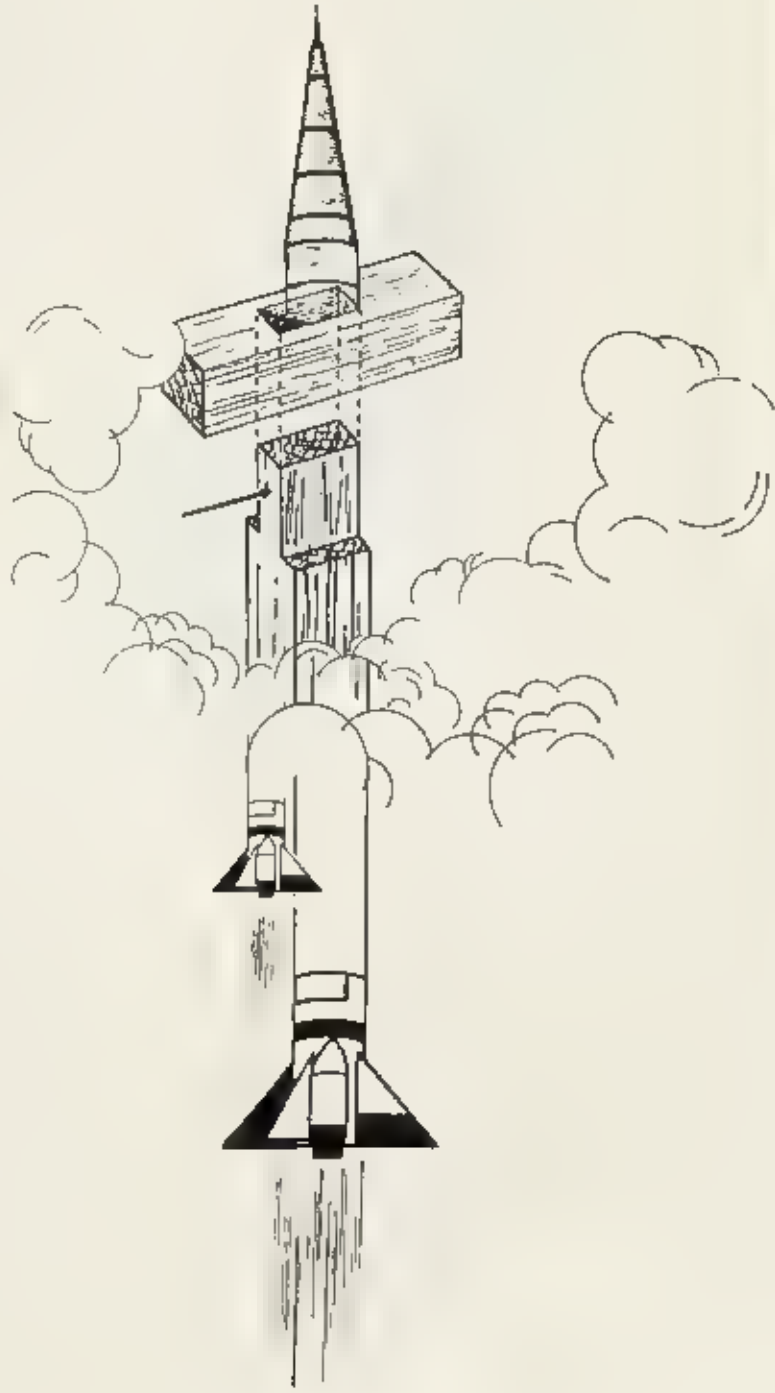
be played



1. the *nineteenth* letter of the English alphabet from the Greek *sigma*, a borrowing from the Phoenician 2 any of the speech sounds that this letter represents, 3. a type or impress.on for S or s 4. the **nineteenth** in a sequence or group 5. an object **shaped like S**

**scaf•fold•ing - n.**

1. the poles, planks, etc that form a scaffold 2. a scaffold or system of scaffolds

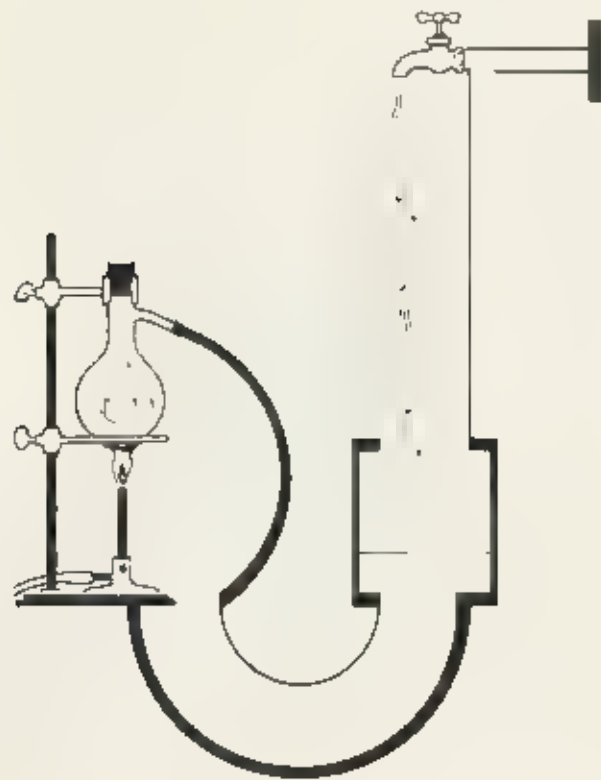


1. the *twentieth* letter of the English alphabet from the Greek *tau*, derived from Hebrew tau 2. any of the speech sounds that this letter represents, 3. a type or impression for T or t 4. the **twentieth** in a sequence or group 5 an object **shaped like T**

**ten | on - n.**

1. a **projecting part** cut on the end of a piece of wood, etc for insertion into corresponding hole (**mortise**) in another piece to make a joint 2 to make a **tenon (on)**





1. the *twenty-first* letter of the English alphabet: formally a variant of *V*, *v*, not until the 18th cent. was it established as a vowel symbol only 2. any of the speech sounds that this letter represents, 3. a type or impression for *U* or *u* 4. the **twenty-first** in a sequence or group 5. an object **shaped like U**

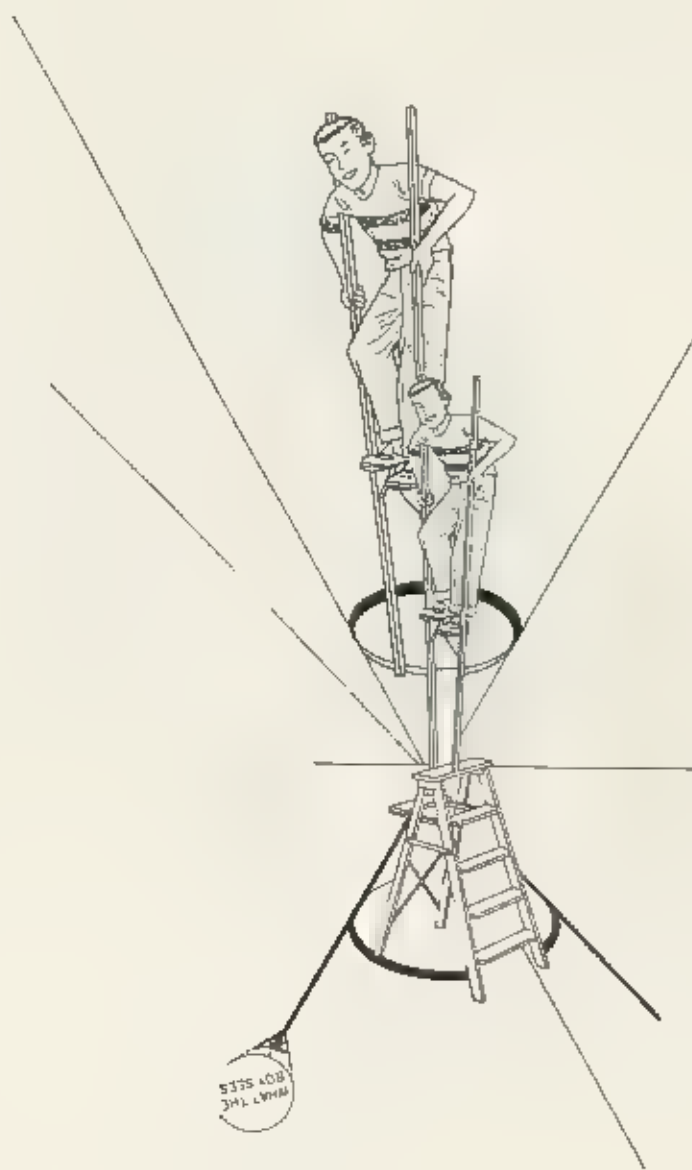
**u | r e | o | t e | l | i | c - adj.**

1. designating those animals, as mammals or fish, that **excrete** most of their waste nitrogen in the form of urea in the urine cf 1 RE. VOTF. 44

1. the *twenty-second* letter of the English alphabet: from the Latin *V*, derived from one form of the Greek *Υ* (upsilon) formerly used interchangeably in English with *U* both as a vowel and as a consonant, now only a consonant 2. any of the speech sounds that this letter represents, 3. a type or impression for *V* or *v* 4. the **twenty-second** in a sequence or group 5. an object **shaped like V**

**v | i | s | i | o | n | a | l - adj.**

1. of, or having the nature of a **vision** or **visions** 2. seen, or as if seen, in a vision, unreal



unreal

WHAT THE BOY SEES

1. the *twenty-third* letter of the English alphabet: its sound was represented in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts by *uu* or *u* until about 900 A.D. then by *v* (*iven*) borrowed from the runic alphabet, in the 11th cent. a ligatured *VV* or *vv* was introduced by Norman scribes to replace the *wen* 2. any of the speech sounds that this letter represents, 3. a type or impression for *W* or *w* 4. the **twenty-third** in a sequence or group 5. an object **shaped like W**

**whid - vi.** whid'ded, whid'ding  
1. to move **nimbly**





twenty-fourth letter  
**xyster**  
 1545

1. the *twenty-fourth* letter of the English alphabet: from a western Greek alphabet 2. any of the speech sounds that this letter represents, 3. a type or impression for X or x 4. the **twenty-fourth** in a sequence or group
  5. an object **shaped like X**
    1. a surgical instrument for scraping bones
    2. to
- xys•ter - n.**
- scrape **h a r d s .**



twenty-fifth letter  
**Yvonne**  
 1552

1. the *twenty-fifth* letter of the English alphabet: from the Greek *upsilon* 2. any of the speech sounds that this letter represents, 3. a type or impression for Y or y 4. the **twenty-fifth** in a sequence or group 5. an object **shaped like Y**
- Y | vonne -**  
 1. a

feminine  
 name var *Yvette*



twenty-sixth letter  
**zymurgy**  
 1557

1. the *twenty-sixth* and last letter of the English alphabet: via Latin from the Greek *zeta*
  2. any of the speech sounds that this letter represents, 3. a type or impression for Z or z 4. the **twenty-sixth** in a sequence or group 5. an object **shaped like Z**
- zy•mur | gy - n.**
1. the branch of chemistry dea ing
- with **fermentation**  
 as in making  
 wine  
 brewing  
 etc.



WALKER  
ART  
CENTER

1996  
1997  
INTERNSHIP

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# HYBRID DIGITAL TYPEFACES

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FONT LIBRARY  
EXTENDED DIGITAL TYPE FAMILIES

VOLUME I, II, III  
•EACH VOLUME CONTAINS TWENTY FONTS•  
1993

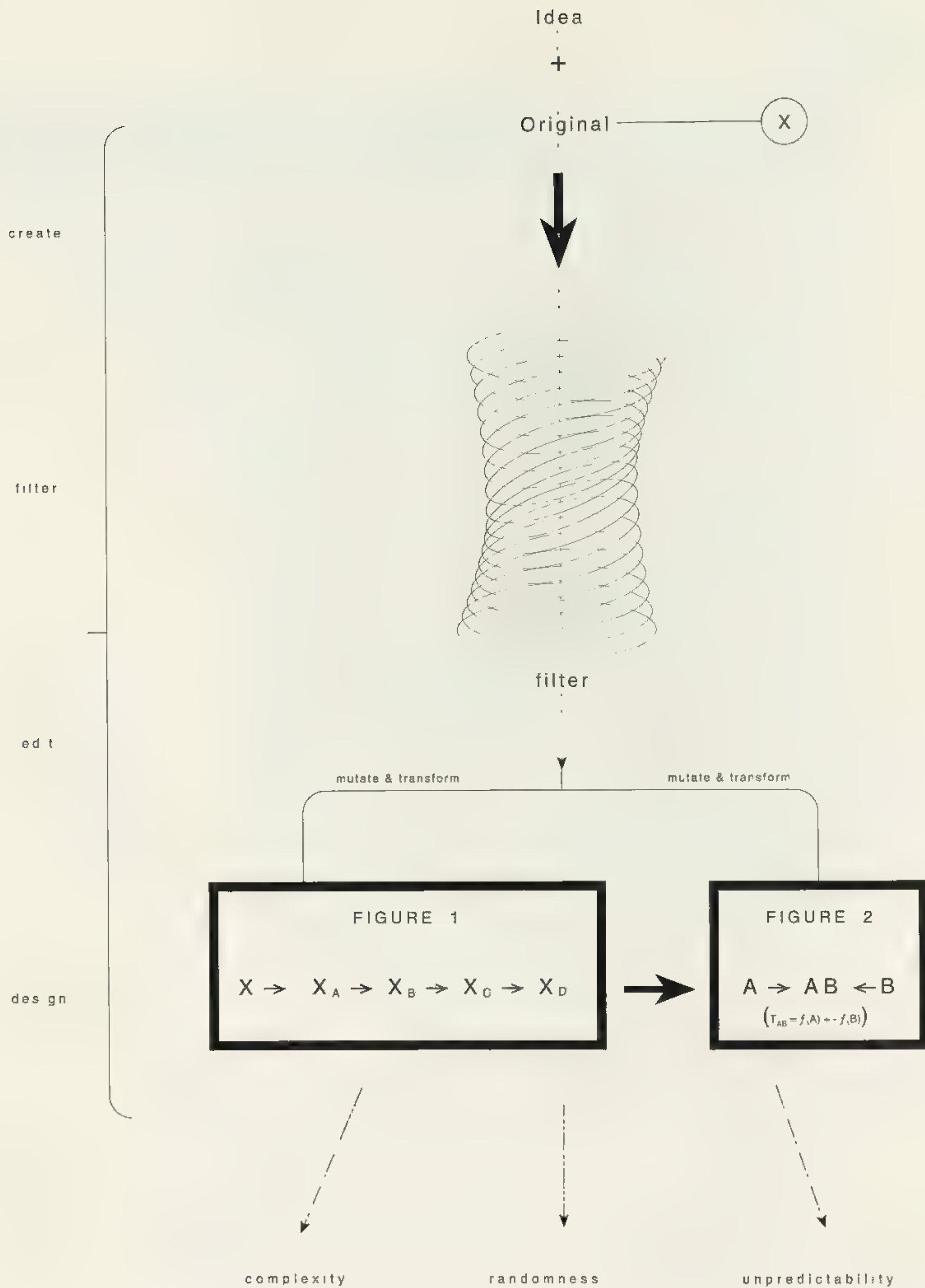
BY MARGO JOHNSON

**INTRODUCTION TO TYPEFACES** The following pages contain extracts from the book *Hybrid Digital Typefaces*, an experiment in generating fonts. My intent in form making here is to use current technology to assist in the production of design, as well as a process to create new forms. Results of the study focus on experiments that are concerned primarily with generating pure form over functionality or legibility. As the process takes place, subtle patterns start to appear, but predictability is thwarted, which results in unexpected forms. These typefaces, like intrahybrid species of genetic engineering, seem to decompose and recompose in form. The theme becomes that of an evolution of mutation, degradation, deterioration, fragmentation, and of heading into the unknown. New forms emerge out of the metamorphosis or the spaces in between. Unlike hand-rendered letter form experiments, today's technology allows for expression that can immediately be transformed into a digital font. This collection of fonts is just a sampling of the possibilities that remain for the future. For my own purposes, the following process serves as a type of sketchbook where I have generated extensive form permutations that can be stored as a personal typeface library to select from when needed.

**GUIDE TO DIAGRAMS** The typefaces catalogued in this compendium follow a transformation matrix that structures a study of generating systems. The diagrams visually document the method used to create each typeface. — Diagram One simply starts with an existing form, "X." The typeface in its original form is applied to a controlled system of manipulation. The filtering process involves two different formulas. The first type in Figure 1 shows a simple transformation of X into four new versions of X. Each version, A, B, C and D, results from a different variable. This type of mathematical filtration produces endless variations from one original form. Four of the most different and interesting variations of each theme were then selected. The random result of this editing method was then applied to a controlled system. Figure 2 shows a different type of transformation. Two of the variables from the first process, A and B, cross to create a new typeface, AB. This simple fusion of variables from two forms is extended to create an entire volume of fonts. — Diagram Two maps the hybridization of typefaces created from one original font. The matrix applies the first four variables to the x and y axis, resulting in sixteen more typefaces. The matrix is applied to three typefaces, a serif, sans serif, and script, each forming a volume of twenty new typefaces. MJ

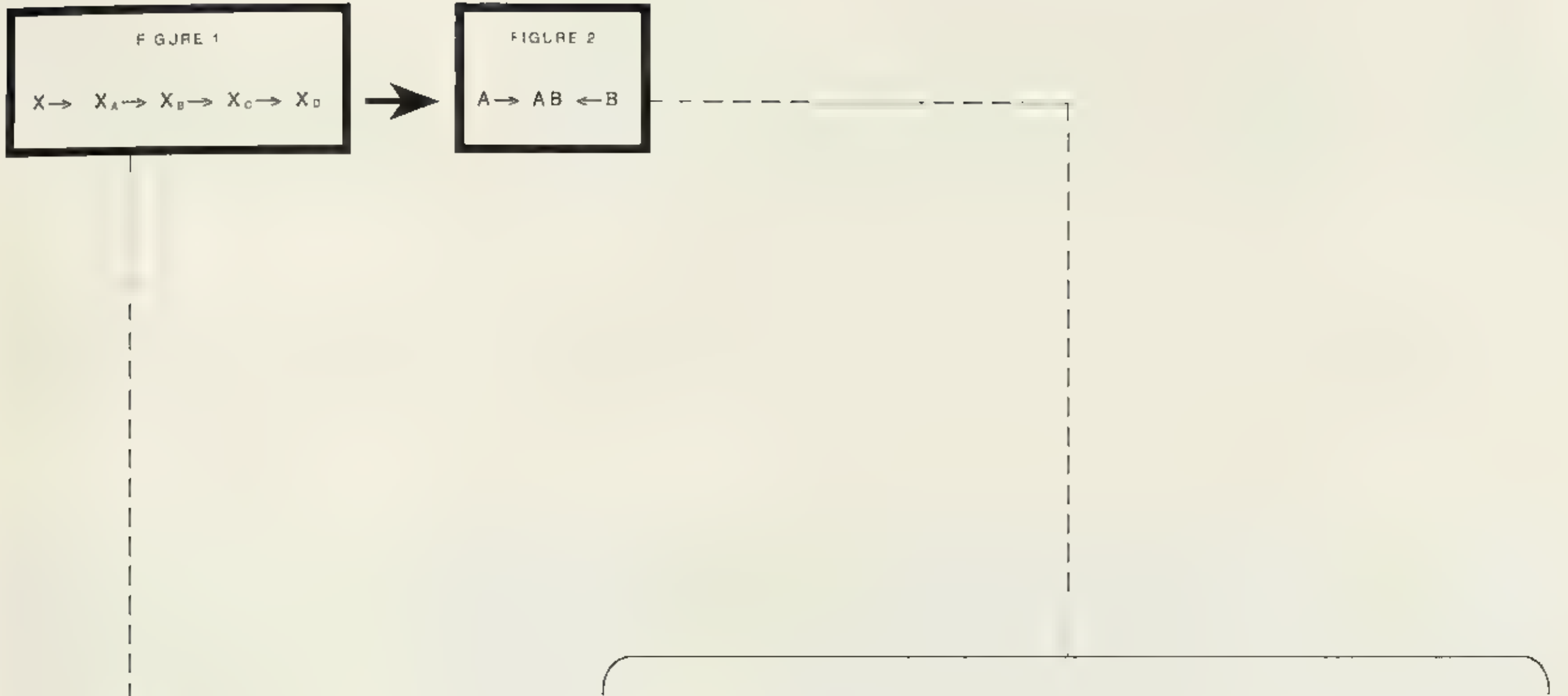


# DIAGRAM ONE





# DIAGRAM TWO



|              | Originalfont | A<br>CyBerfont | B<br>CyBorgfont | C<br>Gigafont   | D<br>Hyperfont |
|--------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| A CyBerfont  |              | Berber<br>A+A  | Berborg<br>A+B  | Bergig<br>A+C   | Berhyp<br>A+D  |
| B CyBorgfont |              | Borgber<br>B+A | Borgborg<br>B+B | Borgig<br>B+C   | Borghyp<br>B+D |
| C Gigafont   |              | Gigaber<br>C+A | Gigaborg<br>C+B | Gigagiga<br>C+C | Gigahyp<br>C+D |
| D Hyperfont  |              | Hypber<br>D+A  | Hypborg<br>D+B  | Hypgig<br>D+C   | Hyphyp<br>D+D  |



# VOLUME I

"CYBERFONTS"

BASED ON COOPER BLACK

Cooper Black

Volume I no. x

**Type Is Meant To Be Read.**

**There Can Be No Deviation From That One Elemental Truth.**  
**abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ**

Cyberfont

Volume I no. 1

Type Is Meant To Be Read.

There Can Be No Deviation From That One Elemental Truth.  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Berber

Volume I no. 2

Type Is Meant To Be Read.

There Can Be No Deviation From That One Elemental Truth.  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Berborg

Volume I no. 3

Type Is Meant To Be Read.

There Can Be No Deviation From That One Elemental Truth.  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Bergig

Volume I no. 4

Type Is Meant To Be Read.  
There Can Be No Deviation From That One Elemental Truth.  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ



**TyPc Is Meant T- Be Read.**  
 There Can Be N- Deviation Fr- m That -ne Elemental Truth.  
 a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

**Type Is Meant To Be Read.**  
 There Can Be No Deviation From That One Elemental Truth.  
 a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

**Type Is Meant To Be Read.**  
 There Can Be No Deviation From That One Elemental Truth.  
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**Type Is Meant To Be Read.**  
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**TyDe Is Meant T- Be Read.**  
 There Can Be N- Deviation Fr- m That One Elemental Truth.  
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**TyP+ Is Meant To Be Read.**  
 There Can Be No Deviation From That One Elemental Truth.  
 a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

**TyDe Is Meant To Be Read.**  
 There Can Be No Deviation From That One Elemental Truth.  
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**TyDe Is Meant To Be Read.**  
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**Type Is Meant To Be Read.**  
 There Can Be No Deviation From That One Elemental Truth.  
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**Type Is Meant To Be Read.**  
 There Can Be No Deviation From That One Elemental Truth.  
 abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ



# VOLUME II

"FRANKFONTS"

BASED ON FRANKLIN GOTHIC

Franklin Gothic

Volume II no x

**Type is Meant To Be Read.**  
There Can Be No Deviation From That One Elemental Truth.  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Frankli

Volume II no.1

**Type Is Meant To Be Read.**  
There Can Be No Deviation From That One Elemental Truth  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Frankfrank

Volume II no 2

**Type is Meant To Be Read.**  
There Can Be No Deviation From That One Elemental Truth.  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Franlin

Volume II no 3

**Type is Meant To Be Road.**  
There Can Be No Deviation From That One Elemental Truth.  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Fransan

Volume I no 4

**Type is Meant To Be Read.**  
There Can Be No Deviation From That One Elemental Truth.  
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Frangoth

**Type is Meant to Be Read.**  
There Can Be No Deviation From That One Elemental Truth.  
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Klinic

**Type is Moant To Be Road.**  
There Can Be No Deviation From That One Elemental Truth.  
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Klinfrank

**Type Is Meant To Be Read.**  
There Can Be No Deviation From That One Elemental Truth.  
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Klinklin

**Type is Moant To Be Road.**  
There Can Be No Deviation From That One Elemental Truth.  
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Klinsan

**U, S, V, L, O, B, D, C.**  
There Can Be No Deviation From That One Elemental Truth.  
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Klingoth

**Type is meant to Be Read.**  
There Can Be No Deviation From That One Elemental Truth.  
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Sanser

**U, S, V, L, O, B, D, C.**  
There Can Be No Deviation From That One Elemental Truth.  
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Sanfrank

**U, S, V, L, O, B, D, C.**  
There Can Be No Deviation From That One Elemental Truth.  
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z



Sanklin

Volume I no 13

I yoe is Meant to Be Read.  
There Can Be no Deviation From That One Elemental Truth.  
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Sansan

Volume I no 14

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There Can Be no Deviation From That One Elemental Truth.  
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Sangoth

Volume I no 15

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Gothin

Volume II no 16

I yoe is Meant to Be Read.  
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Gothfrank

Volume I no 17

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There Can Be no Deviation From That One Elemental Truth.  
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Gothklin

Volume I no 18

I yoe is Meant to Be Read.  
There Can Be no Deviation From That One Elemental Truth.  
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Gothsan

Volume I no 19

I yoe is Meant to Be Read.  
There Can Be no Deviation From That One Elemental Truth.  
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Gothgoth

Volume II no 20

I yoe is Meant to Be Read.  
There Can Be no Deviation From That One Elemental Truth.  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ



# VOLUME III

"SCRIFONTS"

BASED ON KUENSTLER SCRIPT

Kuenstler Script

Volume III no x

*Type Is Meant To Be Read.*

*There Can Be No Deviation From That One Elemental Truth.*  
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z . t . B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Kuenst

Volume III no 1

*Type Is Meant To Be Read*

*There Can Be No Deviation From That One Elemental Truth.*  
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z . t . B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Kuenkuenst

Volume III no 2

*Type Is Meant To Be Read*

*There Can Be No Deviation From That One Elemental Truth.*  
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z . t . B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Kueneler

Volume III no 3

*Type Is Meant To Be Read*

*There Can Be No Deviation From That One Elemental Truth.*  
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z . t . B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Kuenkursiv

Volume I no 4





**Type Is Meant To Be Read.**  
 There Can Be No Deviation From That One Elemental Truth.  
 a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

**Type Is Meant To Be Read.**  
 There Can Be No Deviation From That One Elemental Truth.  
 a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

*Type Is Meant To Be Read.*  
*There Can Be No Deviation From That One Elemental Truth.*  
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**Type Is Meant To Be Read.**  
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**Type Is Meant To Be Read.**  
 There Can Be No Deviation From That One Elemental Truth.  
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**Type Is Meant To Be Read.**  
 There Can Be No Deviation From That One Elemental Truth.  
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**Type Is Meant To Be Read.**  
 There Can Be No Deviation From That One Elemental Truth.  
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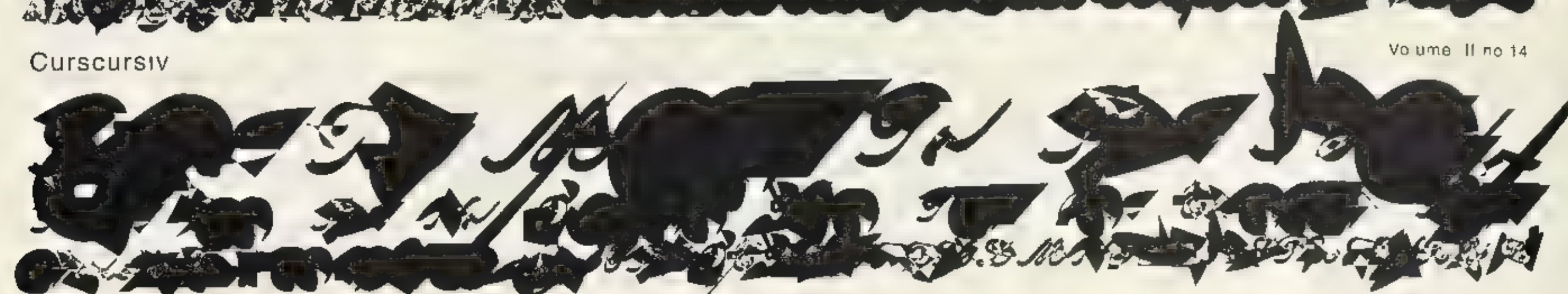
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Volume III no 13



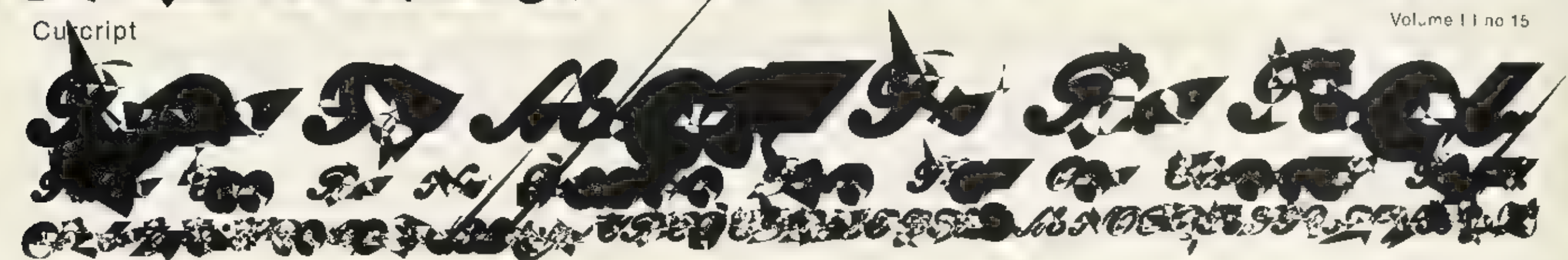
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Volume II no 14



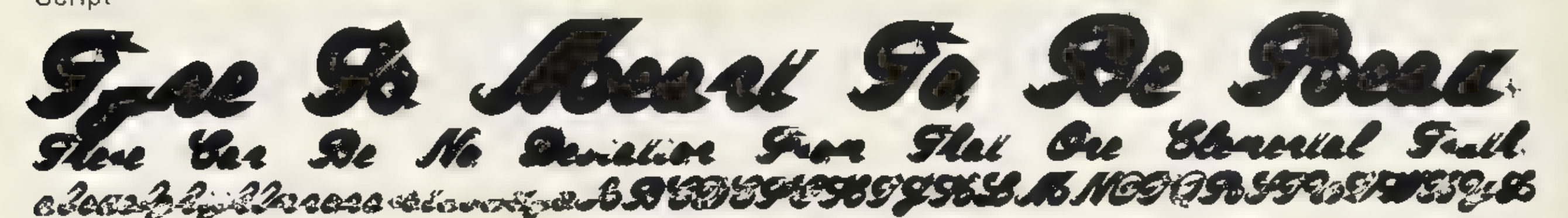
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Volume I no 15



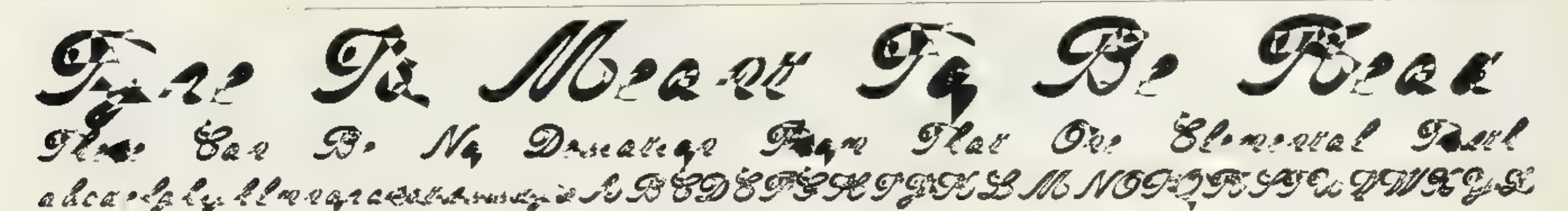
Script

Volume III no 16



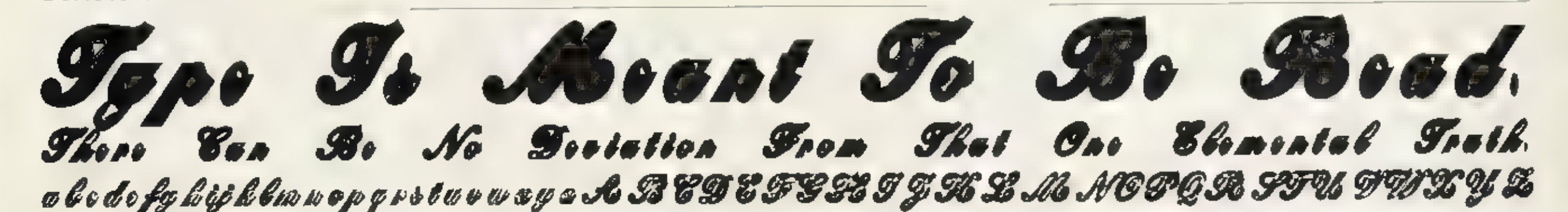
Scrikuenst

Volume I no 17



Scristeler

Volume III no 18



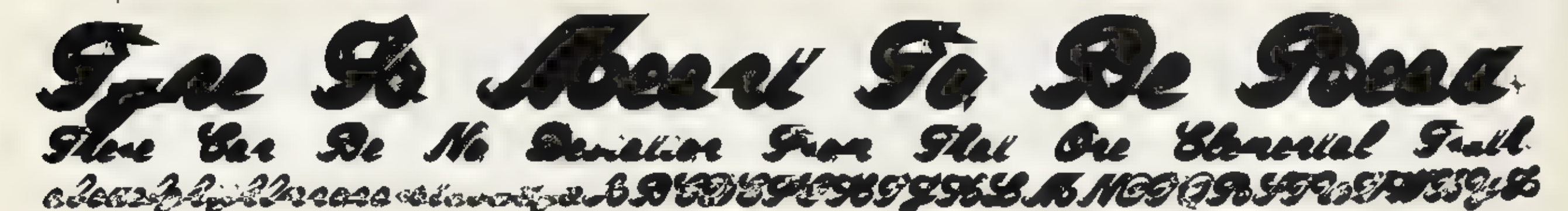
Scricursiv

Volume III no 19



Script

Volume I no 20





Desperately Seeking David, OR READING *Ray Gun*, OBLIQUELY

by ANDREW BLAUVELT

## I

*The Designer as Auteur*

- 1.1 In film theory, *auteurism* is the belief that the director is the creative force in control of his medium. The director's expressive style and unique vision are the primary forces shaping and controlling his creative output. This theory helps to explain why certain films can be found under a director's name in a video store — Alfred Hitchcock, Francois Truffaut, David Lynch, even Russ Myers — while others are consigned to the generic typologies of mystery, drama, or comedy.
- 1.2 Graphic design, like film, is constructed around this notion of *auteurism* as, perhaps, its greatest theme and legitimizing principle. At the center of this concept stands the designer, who through his uncompromising disposition is able to assert his role above the messy exchanges of commerce and control his creative vision. Although individual works may vary, the *auteur* is able to maintain a consistent personal vision as his name both connects and unifies disparate projects. The romantic myths associated with *auteurism* are to be found sprinkled liberally through interviews, biographies, presentations, reviews, monographs and profiles: heroic, determined, passionate, the designer battles both clients and critics — all those who seek to take control of his work.
- 1.3 The passage of the graphic designer from

## II

*The Reader as Subject*

- 2.1 "I was walking through the newsstand today and from a corner a magazine called quietly, yet confidently, 'hey you.' I unhesitatingly stepped forth and took it in both hands: *Ray Gun*. It's absolutely stunning in all aspects — design, layout, art, custom fonts...oh yeah, and the content. Your articles are just as much on the edge as your look. Thanks, and good luck in following this opening act." — V.L. KLEIN, DENVER, CO
- 2.2 While much has been said and printed about *Ray Gun*, from both the standpoint of the designer and as a work of design, very little has been said about its readership. The sheer volume of published correspondence as well as the intense identification with the magazine, makes *Ray Gun* a particularly good candidate for just such an examination, restricted as it is to those readers motivated to write letters.
- 2.3 A majority of the letter writers to *Ray Gun* seem to identify the magazine with immediate, personal connection and self-discovery. For them, *Ray Gun* is "what [they] have been waiting for." The intimate connection between its marketplace niche as an alternative music magazine and its alternative visual style (the self-proclaimed Bible of style) creates a synergy of difference and distinction. *Ray Gun* both initiates the uninitiated and confirms the converted.
- 2.4 "Hello. I just bought your first issue and enjoyed all of it. Especially the articles on Rollins and Sonic Youth. This is the best magazine I've read. It's better than Creem and Spin and Rolling Stone.

## III

*Signs of These Times*

- 3.1 "Although Carson does not claim to have a grand theory, being more concerned with working intuitively, the work resonates with ideas from fine art. This assimilation is not deliberate: the methodology would seem to be one that would reject sources, if they were spotted. However, in the same way that 'you cannot not communicate' so you cannot escape the conditions of this time and place." — LEWIS BLACKWELL, *THE END OF PRINT*
- 3.2 I recently attended a lecture by Erik Spiekermann where he projected the following maxim on the screen: "You cannot not communicate." I had encountered this same statement while reading *The End of Print*. This statement is also the headline of a lecture poster designed by David Carson accompanied by the tag line: "or, you can tell a book by its cover." I found it interesting that two designers as different as Carson and Spiekermann — some might say they represent two poles of graphic design — could lay claim to the same truism. For Spiekermann and Carson, the statement is used to comment on the inevitability of any communicative action to represent something. Now, just what that something is, is another matter altogether. For Spiekermann, the statement is used to invoke the agency of the designer to resolve communication needs, in the course of which he arrives back at the message: to faithfully represent "the message." For Carson, the statement is used to rebuff claims that



from anonymity to celebrity surely marks the evolution of the profession from its derogatory status as commercial art — the subjugated laborer — to its current claims to artistic expression — the originating creator. The evolution of the "star circuit" — that endless procession of one-night lectures and one-day workshops, resembling at times the makings of a concert tour — represents the full embodiment of this belief in the cult of the personality. The ascent and full presence of the designer can and should be contrasted with that other event at the very heart of postmodern desire: the death of the author.

1.4 The author, like the designer, is a distinctly modern figure. The author is seen as both beginning and end; initiator, source, and origin of his thoughts and the final authority regarding the interpretation of his work. To be the author is to be in control of one's words. The author's words are thought to return home in much the same way that salmon return to their spawning grounds. Leading words home gives closure to meaning.

1.5 "It is obviously insufficient to repeat empty slogans: the author has disappeared; God and man died a common death. Rather, we should reexamine the empty space left by the author's disappearance; we should attentively observe, along its gaps and fault lines, its new demarcations, and the reappointment of this void; we should await the fluid functions released by this disappearance."

— MICHEL FOUCAULT, *WHAT IS AN AUTHOR?*

1.6 Widely celebrated in art and design programs across the country, the demise of the theory of the author as the sole authority and adjudicator of meaning in his work creates a beneficial power vacuum for the graphic designer — a void he eagerly fills. Rather than understanding that the demise

Rolling Stone. Ray Gun goes more in depth. I'm what you might call an alternative type. I love punk, modern, new wave, alternative and I love rave parties." — BRENDEN BOATRIGH<sup>1</sup>

2.5 A favorite and perhaps obvious point of comparison for many readers are those magazines pitched to a wider audience of music listeners, such as *Rolling Stone*. Other readers differentiate between *Ray Gun* and other sources for so-called alternative music coverage, such as *Alternative Press*, while some draw comparisons to the subculture of music zines. The comparison with fanzines is instructive, not because readers confuse *Ray Gun* with them, but because they freely associate the spontaneous nature of zine production with the visual exuberance of the designer's formally studied effects and carefully controlled chaos. It's the sign of spontaneity that is important, not the realities of the designer's process (that reportedly includes stacks of laser prints exploring seemingly limitless possibilities). The full color and glossy production values, not to mention its widespread distribution system, clearly distinguishes *Ray Gun* from its photocopied cousins, even when *Ray Gun* chooses to use low resolution laserprints.

2.6 "You thrust the best parts of *Spin*, *Alternative Press*, and those artsy fanzines that students run off on their school photocopiers into a fireball of sharp, cutting images, explosive ideas and raw energy that drive the reader to the screaming, flesh-tearing, nerve-exploding, orgasmic height of ecstasy...and I think it's really cool you don't have page numbers." — LIBBY, PITTSFIELD, N.H.

2.7 Unmastery in the rules of design and mistakes in editing are assigned new value in this context. No longer flaws in content or design, these "mistakes" are carefully and not so carefully deployed and are understood by many readers as signs of authenticity

that his work "fails" to communicate, in the course of which he arrives back at the designer and his creative expression: to faithfully represent "himself."

3.3 Both positions are problematic since they ignore the larger context in which graphic design is created, produced, distributed and experienced; reaching inward to either the message or to the designer rather than outward to the context in which it circulates. Both of these positions are to be expected since they have already been occupied — dare I say theorized? — in terms of graphic design in this century. The designer as conduit and the designer as expressive vehicle are the proper roles and positions to adopt since both reflect earlier attempts at defining the practice of graphic design as either additive expression or reductive process. Blackwell is at great pains in his text to position Carson's work within the already defined parameters of the artist/designer, and despite Blackwell's anti-theoretical posturing, he still arrives at a theoretical position for Carson. This positioning is a very difficult maneuver to execute because it demands that the subject (Carson) always evade capture, categorization, reduction, definition, explanation, etc. The subject has to be free to act independently, autonomously from both the conventions ("rules") of graphic design and the influences of other designers. Blackwell's text therefore stresses the originality, inventiveness, uniqueness of Carson's design work while preempting many of the challenges to these qualities that have been discussed over the last several years. Therefore, Carson's designs spring forth from the creative imagination — that



the demise of authorial control occurs precisely because it is beyond his control, the designer instead substitutes himself as the purveyor of meaning. Exploding the myths of neutrality, graphic designers lay claim to a vast repertoire of graphic devices that assert the presence of the designer in ways that make those earlier '70's and '80's gestural marks — you remember them: art marks, paint drips, hand prints — seem like the empty and impersonal clichés they are. Direct textual intervention and interpretation are called for as the transparency of the text is occluded by the opacity of the designer. Free to interpret the texts supplied to him, the designer strives to fill the space left by the disappearance of both the author and the typesetter.

- 1.7 What the philosophy of auteurism fails to see is the entirety of the system that allows for its very realization. Just as the institutions and systems of film making cannot have the director as the sole creative agent — one glimpse at the film credits shows this — the practice of graphic design cannot sustain the philosophy of auteurism without suppressing other creative agents also involved in its production. This is more than simply giving credit where credit is due (even though most designers don't and continue to point fingers elsewhere when they should be looking in the mirror). The utter originality claimed by the designer is at odds with very integrated, media-saturated, cross-influenced, and global nature of graphic design practice today. A quick glance at the deluge of designer monographs currently circulating in graphic design testifies to the myth of the insulated, but not isolated, designer — magically shielded from any influence

authenticity and sincerity. Occasionally readers will offer advice and criticism over these "mistakes," thereby exposing their naiveté surrounding their ironic usage through gestures like repeating whole sections of essays, ignoring page numbering, obliterating text, or an excessive number of typos. In their criticism, both negative and positive, many readers display an intimate knowledge of design and its technical production that is revealed in their use of trade jargon and design-related references. Some of these letter writers are students of design who see the existence of *Ray Gun* as confirmation that their design education is lacking: "I'm a young graphic communications student and your mag is a masterpiece of 'don'ts' in our curriculum." Some readers offer suggestions and occasional admonishments to the art director for putting black type over dark photographs, choosing "bad" fonts, or not centering the pages to avoid cutting off letters and words. However, the vast majority read *Ray Gun's* "mistakes" as part of the package that sets it apart, gives it character in an otherwise uniform world of polish and glitz. Even when the effects are recognized as studied, the contradictory nature of the codes (i.e., professionally "unprofessional") is fully logical in the world *Ray Gun* creates:

- 2.8 "I love your magazine. The pictures and art work are innovative yet traditional. The interviews and articles are splendorous in a dull kind of way. In other words I love it love it love it. The number of typos I think adds to your splendor." — HEATHER LEBLANC, JAX, FL
- 2.9 A paradox of attraction and repulsion defines the reception that *Ray Gun* receives, both in its visual look and its editorial content. While much has been made, at least in certain design circles, about the supposed illegibility of *Ray Gun*, the bulk of the letters

that romanticized void of creative genius. The rhetoric reaches hyperbole on the dust jacket: "At the cutting edge, [Carson] continually reinvents the relationship between design and type and has single-handedly changed the course of graphic design." (author's emphasis)

- 3.4 The avoidance of categorization leads Blackwell to adopt the generic, if predictable, mantle of expressionism, even as he acknowledges that the term is too broad to be meaningful. And rather than discussing the phenomenon of expressionism in the context of graphic design, Blackwell sites only abstract expressionist painters as analogous predecessors. The move is, of course, strategic because he is able to ally Carson with the cultural cachet associated with "the arts" and artists without contextualizing the arrival of Carson on the design scene as but the latest heir to the throne of graphic expressionist (a dynasty that stretches from Marinetti to Weingart to Brody, among others, depending on who one reads).
- 3.5 The decontextualization of Carson from the current design scene is particularly important in that many others practice in a similar formal vein. In order to explain the difference with work generated at the design programs such as CalArts and Cranbrook, Blackwell adopts a two-pronged approach. On the one hand, he suggests that Carson works without a grand theory and "just does it." On the other hand, he argues that Carson's work is different in the sheer magnitude of its visibility. This is in line with other commentary by Carson (adopted from design critic Ralph Caplan), who suggests that his work goes beyond the crit room and doesn't end up in a flat file because he "experiments in public." Both Carson and Caplan conveniently ignore



any influence found in the world of graphic design magazines and annuals (in which they are included) but very much in touch with the "real world," absorbing minute details of the most naive pieces of the vernacular or the latest offerings of pop culture.

- 1.8 If not the innovative, pioneering creator, then what? The role of the designer could be better understood, not so much as an author (which is itself a modern depiction), but rather as what anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss had termed, in another context, the *bricoleur* and the act of *bricolage*. Like collage, *bricolage* is the piecing together of disparate elements, but in a rather *ad hoc* fashion, making do with what is immediately and readily available. Like the designer, the *bricoleur* recreates, rather than creates, drawing upon an existing world of possibilities. Understood in its widest sense, the *bricoleur* directs not only the orchestration of diverse elements — whether writer's copy, photographer's images, commissioned illustrations, type designs — but also the mixing of pre-existing codes and styles of representation. While every act of *bricolage* could be said to be an act of repetition, it is also an activity that produces difference. While the elements are, in a sense, already there, and therefore presented repetitiously, the production of a new ensemble — a new relationship integrating the old — represents the production of difference. Repetition and difference are the twin engines fueling creative work today. Claims to originality — by designers and others — continue to obscure this social reality. This is ironic considering repetition and difference are at the heart of today's economic

of the letters testifies that the content is fully readable — decipherable, meaningful to readers — even if it is occasionally illegible. Designers too often confuse issues of form and content, failing to see, for example, the possibility of form as content. In fact, this misrecognition is the unsaid, unspoken idea that has come to typify contemporary social life and communication. The idea of *Ray Gun* as some sort of *zeitgeist* — a sign of the times — is an attractive, if predictable, concept. *Ray Gun* is a sign of the times, not as some sort of archetypal icon of the always already defunct cutting edge, but precisely because it is a product of the contradictory nature of the codes of representation that it skillfully uses to position itself in the marketplace, connecting its often isolated readership of self-proclaimed outsiders with and to each other.

- 2.10 "To be blunt, your magazine doesn't have much of a prayer. In the wake of MTV's *Alternative Nation* and the flannel craze hitting even the Paris runways, the combination of art and noise is now commercially desired. *Ray Gun* will succeed, but I fear the spirit will be sucked dry; victim to a series of 'bottom lines,' the cool poetry and portraits will turn void. The ads will swing from hip hotels to chain-store clothing and swank alcohol portraits. The joy of anarchy will be replaced by a new readout hang-out for the masses. That doesn't mean the effort isn't noble." — RON EUGENIO, PERRYVILLE, MO

- 2.11 A concern of some readers, debated through numerous issues, is the problem of eventual incorporation into the "mainstream." Having clearly identified both themselves and *Ray Gun* as "alternative" entities in a larger world of corporate music and conventional publication design, readers remain uncertain of how long this can continue.

- 2.12 The threat of incorporation comes as much from within as from without.

ignore the fact that both design programs occupy a highly visible presence in American and European graphic design circles through articles, books, exhibitions, and annuals in which the work appears — including *Ray Gun* itself. The mere fact that Blackwell must preempt any counter claims by these schools on the work Carson produces simply testifies to the significance and influence of their approaches and represents a fundamental change about how the profession views design education these days.

- 3.6 The stilted portrayal of Carson as a lone maverick is unfortunate because it misses the very real nature of the role he plays in design as it is practiced in the late twentieth century. Carson's role as art director at the various magazines he has designed is essential to understanding this phenomenon. As an art director, Carson is able to call upon various talent — orchestrating the ensemble — to produce "his" work. In his publication design, Carson is able to showcase the latest typeface designers, photographers and illustrators. I would argue that these people provide the necessary contrast to Carson's page layouts and typographic treatments. It is no wonder that the same tactic is used to "illustrate" the title of the book, as Carson solicits responses from other famous designers and illustrators. In fact, it is Ed Fella's submission that encapsulates the Carson phenomenon most cleverly: "*David Carson is the Paganini of Typographers.*" Fella's likening of Carson to the Italian composer best known for his showmanship and technique is a sly reference to the virtuoso performer. Like Fella, I see Carson's performance — the orchestration of the parts — as essential in understanding



economic marketplace, where consumers mull over the finest points of difference, forced to distinguish between nearly identical products.

- 1.9 The point too often forgotten in Barthes's famous essay *THE DEATH OF THE AUTHOR* is the consequence of this demise: "...we know that to give writing its future, it is necessary to overthrow the myth: the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the author." The reader continues to be the blind spot in both literary theory and design practice. The reader does occupy the space left by the disappearance of the author, but only hesitantly as a specter, a phantom presence. The role of the reader in most discussions of graphic design, like the role assigned the designer, is highly inadequate. The reader is understood either as an imaginary, idealized audience, or as a target group, lifestyle profile, or some other kind of compilation of demographic data. All of these concepts of the reader rely on a transmission model of communications. This posits readers as receivers who are seen, therefore, as either screens upon which information and behavior can be projected or as totally free and creative agents, who like their designer counterparts, reenact rituals of invention and discovery. An alternative concept of the reader would be one in which he or she is understood as a producer of meaning, actively constructing meaning from available codes and experiences.

- 1.10 "...a text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation, but there is one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader, not, as was hitherto said, the author. The reader is the space on which

out. Just as with any form of mass communication, the greater the distribution system and readership, the greater the possibilities for sharing what was once intimate group knowledge. As one *Ray Gun* reader put it: "[*Ray Gun*] is indeed different from the norm but let's get real; any day all the wannabe alternative preppy shitholes are going to buy this magazine and another underground subject for us underground dwellers will be mainstream." This aura of authenticity pervades the thoughts of one reader, writing in just the fifth issue: "I hope that, as you become more and more popular, you don't lose touch with your initial vision and your charter readers."

- 2.13 A system of distinguishing authentic from inauthentic, poser from true believer, already exists within the cultures surrounding the music scene that *Ray Gun* attempts to cover. A deep connection to an individual reader's local music scene is frequently the subject of many requests for expanded coverage of "unknown" bands. The obscurity of these bands becomes a defining characteristic for determining the "alternative" nature of the magazine — a litmus test for being truly "in the know." This occurs despite the major marketing emphasis, in the wake of the success of certain Seattle-based bands, on the notion of a regional sound and the inevitable search for bankable local talent. There seems to be a fine line between local band boosterism and full-blown, over-blown, exposure. Knowledge about particular bands regulates the flow of subcultural cachet; after all, "unknown" bands are well known to their fans.

- 2.14 "Beware the ides of March and April and May and every other month you choose to be in print, because like everything pure, good and original, your magazine is bound to be imitated and prostituted to make it palatable for mass consumption. I'm sure the rip-offs are on the stands

understanding the position in which graphic designers routinely operate, which is not as lone genius but rather as (co-?) dependent designer.

- 3.7 "I could put it like a design critic: 'Is there really a coherent set of principles behind [Carson's] work?' Or I could just ask: 'Is there a point to the difference?'" LEWIS BLACKWELL, *THE END OF PRINT*

- 3.8 What is revealing about this statement is the assumption by Blackwell that design critics would seek coherency in discussing Carson's work, that there might be any set of principles, or if so, that they be "behind" the work. I believe Blackwell poses the wrong question in both instances. However, the answer to both queries is: *difference is the point*. To understand my answer, I need to return to Carson's comment: "You can judge a book by its cover." Carson understands that the signs deployed in graphic design exist on the surface of representation; that the cover is indeed meaningful, that it communicates. What may not be clear to Carson or to Blackwell is that what communicates is difference. This articulation of difference is a necessary component in distinguishing the ever increasing number of similar objects that vie for our dollars and attention. The marketing imperative that seeks to address the audiences of subcultures must either "speak its language" or invent and codify a new one. The fit between style and audience was a fortuitous match for Carson, who managed to adopt what was essentially a polemical retort or antidote to the increasingly slick, beautiful, proper work of graphic design and make it resonate with an already defined market for so-called alternative music (and lifestyle). The fact that it defies the conventions of communications is more indicative of the



on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost; a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination." — ROLAND BARTHES,

DEATH OF THE AUTHOR



BACK TO: *The Reader as Subject*

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BACK TO: *Signs of These Times*

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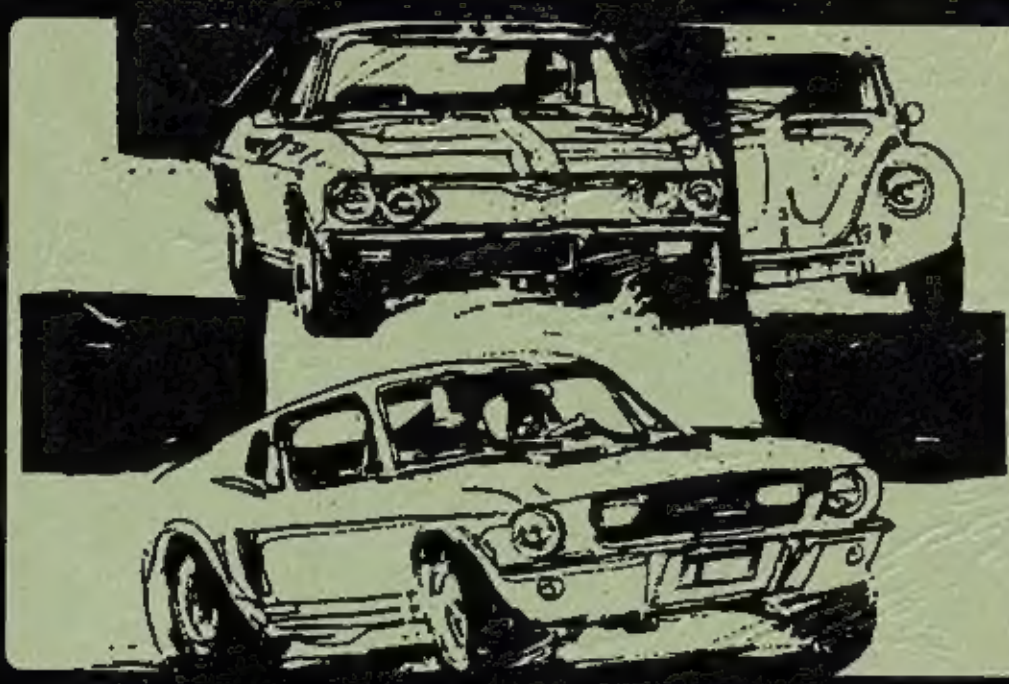
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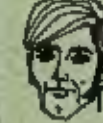
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